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MARCH

ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN!

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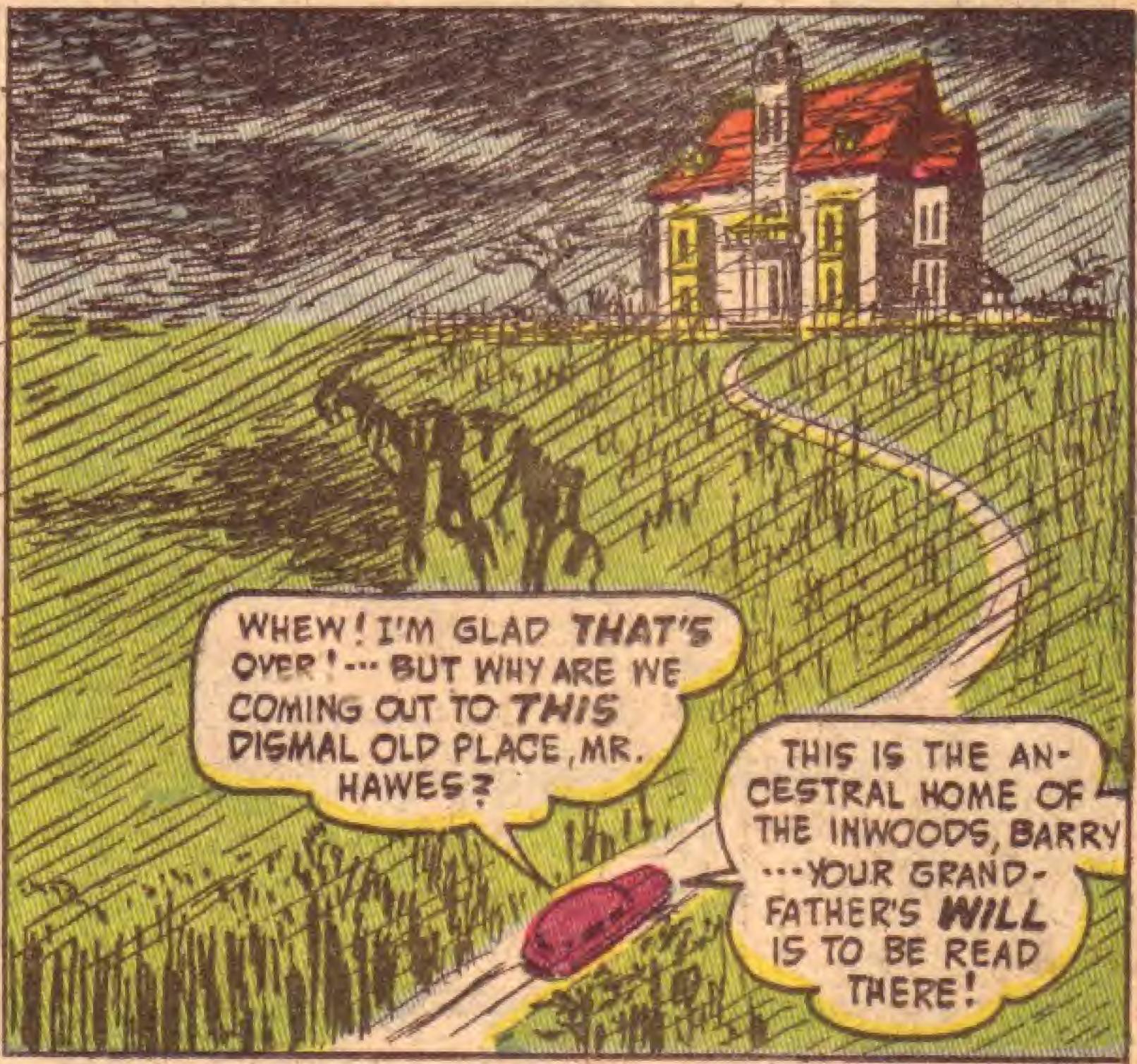


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Invasion OF THE GHOST-MONSTERS



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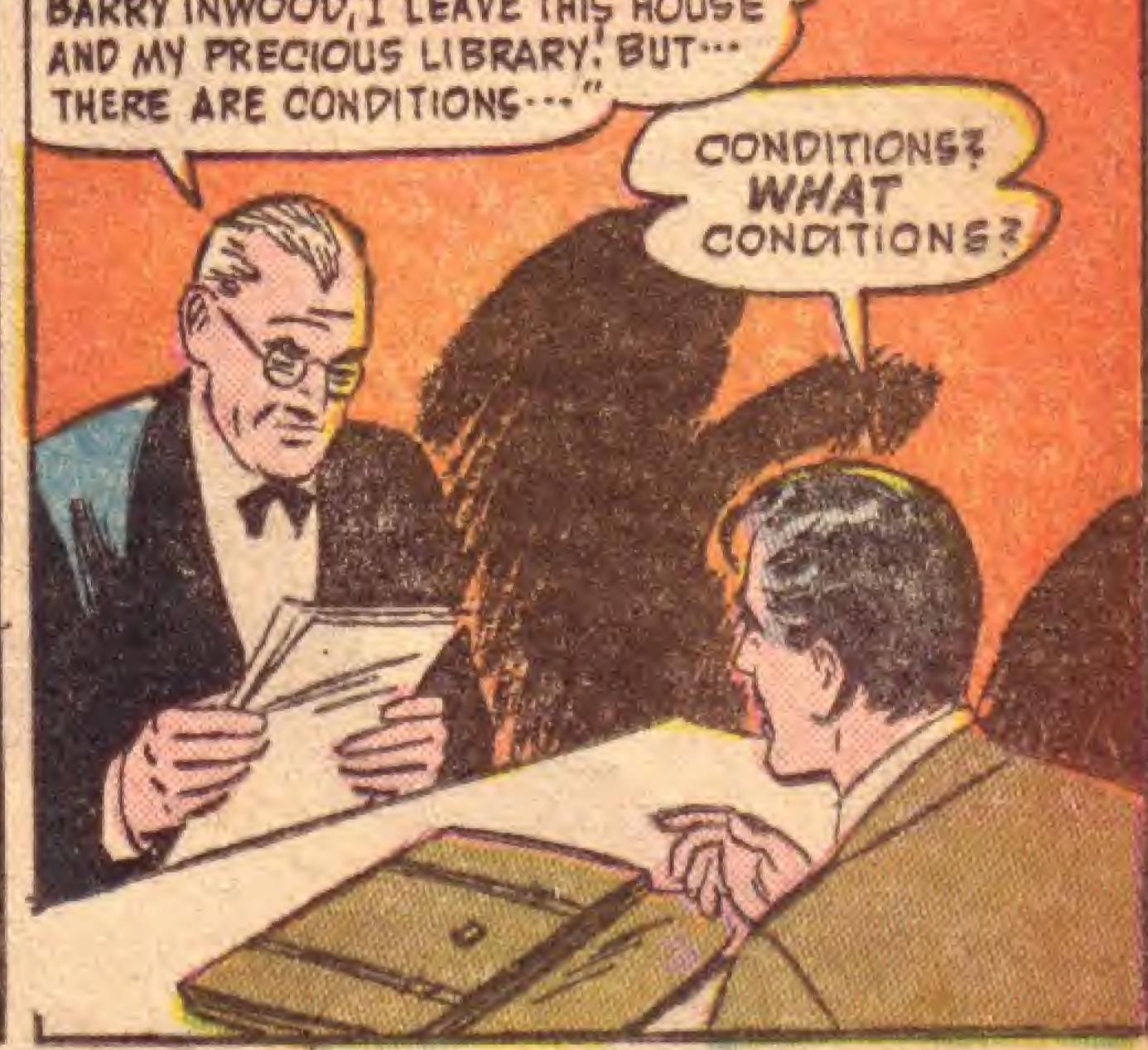
GOSH, WHAT A LIBRARY!
THE OLD BOY MUST HAVE
BEEN A REGULAR BOOK-
WORM!

BOOKS WERE HIS LIFE!
BUT COME...IT'S TIME TO
READ THE WILL!

IT WAS A STRANGE WILL--THE WILL OF A HARMLESS
OLD RECLUSE--OR A MADMAN!

"...AND TO MY ONLY LIVING RELATIVE,
BARRY INWOOD, I LEAVE THIS HOUSE
AND MY PRECIOUS LIBRARY! BUT...
THERE ARE CONDITIONS..."

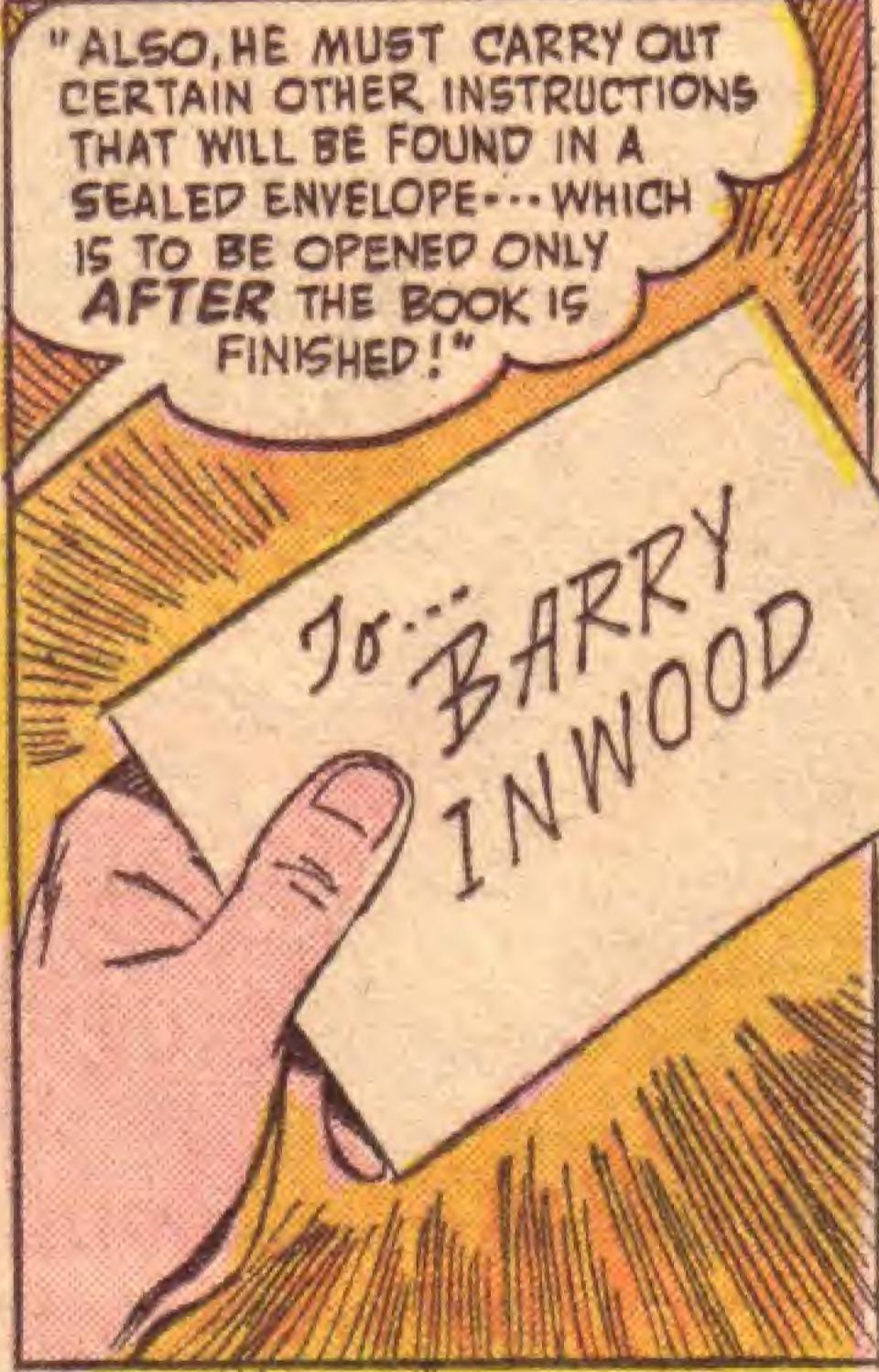
CONDITIONS?
WHAT
CONDITIONS?



"BARRY MUST WRITE MY
BIOGRAPHY...THE COMPLETE
STORY OF MY LIFE! THEN HE MUST
PUBLISH IT AND PLACE A COPY OF
THE BOOK IN THIS LIBRARY!"

"ALSO, HE MUST CARRY OUT
CERTAIN OTHER INSTRUCTIONS
THAT WILL BE FOUND IN A
SEALED ENVELOPE... WHICH
IS TO BE OPENED ONLY
AFTER THE BOOK IS
FINISHED!"

SO THAT'S WHY GRANDFATHER PAID
MY WAY THROUGH JOURNALISM SCHOOL!
HE MUST HAVE PLANNED THIS FOR
YEARS! BUT... WHY?



YOU WILL GET ALL THE
INFORMATION YOU NEED
ABOUT SILAS' LIFE FROM
THESE OLD DIARIES...
EVEN I HAVE NOT
READ THEM!

THANKS, MR. HAWES...I GUESS
I MIGHT AS WELL GET STARTED!
I'LL FULFILL THE CONDITIONS
OF THE WILL...BECAUSE I'LL
NEED THIS HOUSE TO LIVE IN
WHEN I MARRY MY FIANCÉE!

ALL UN-
MINDFUL OF
IMPENDING
TRAGEDY,
BARRY
CALLED IN
A WILLING
HELPER...



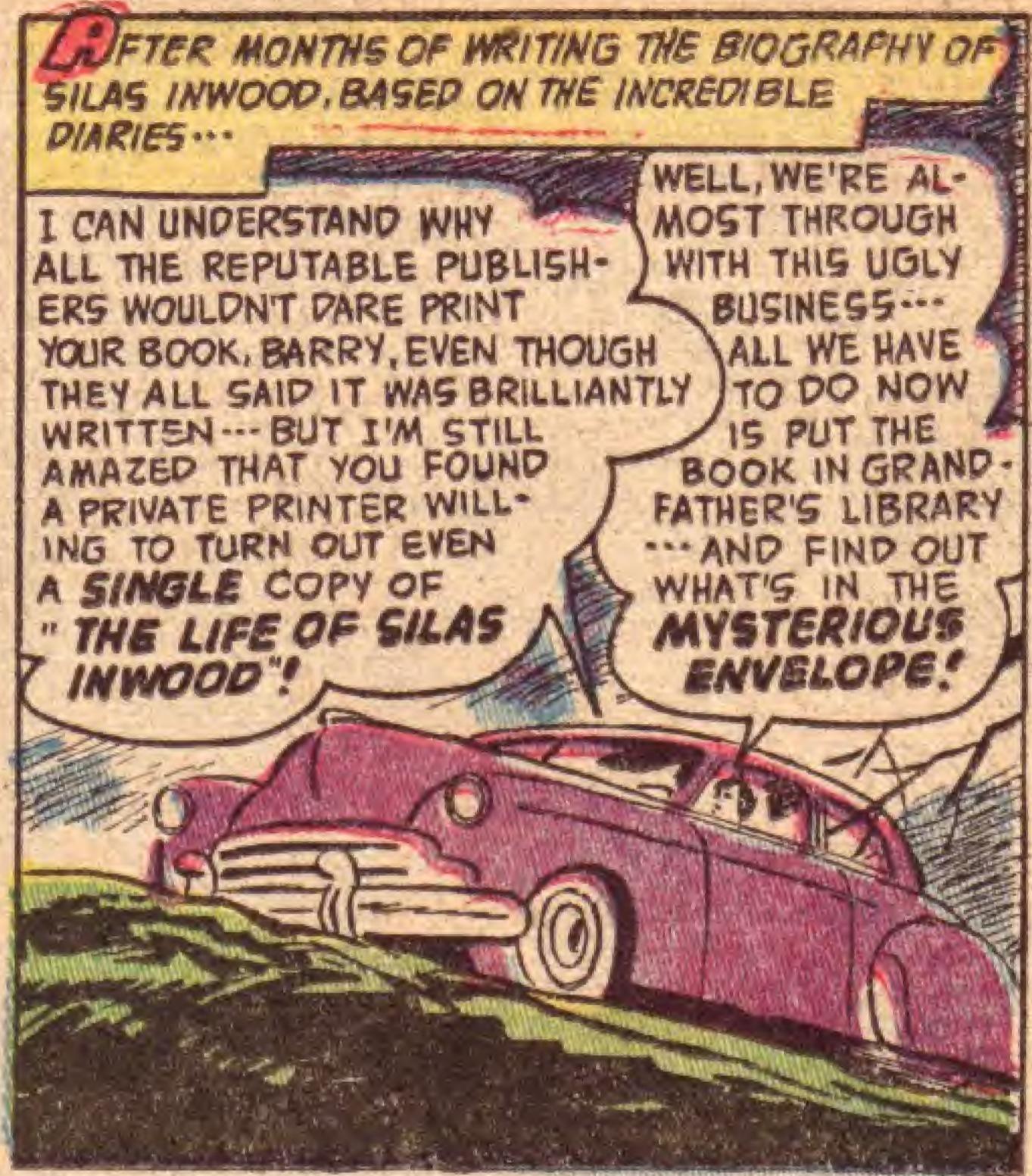
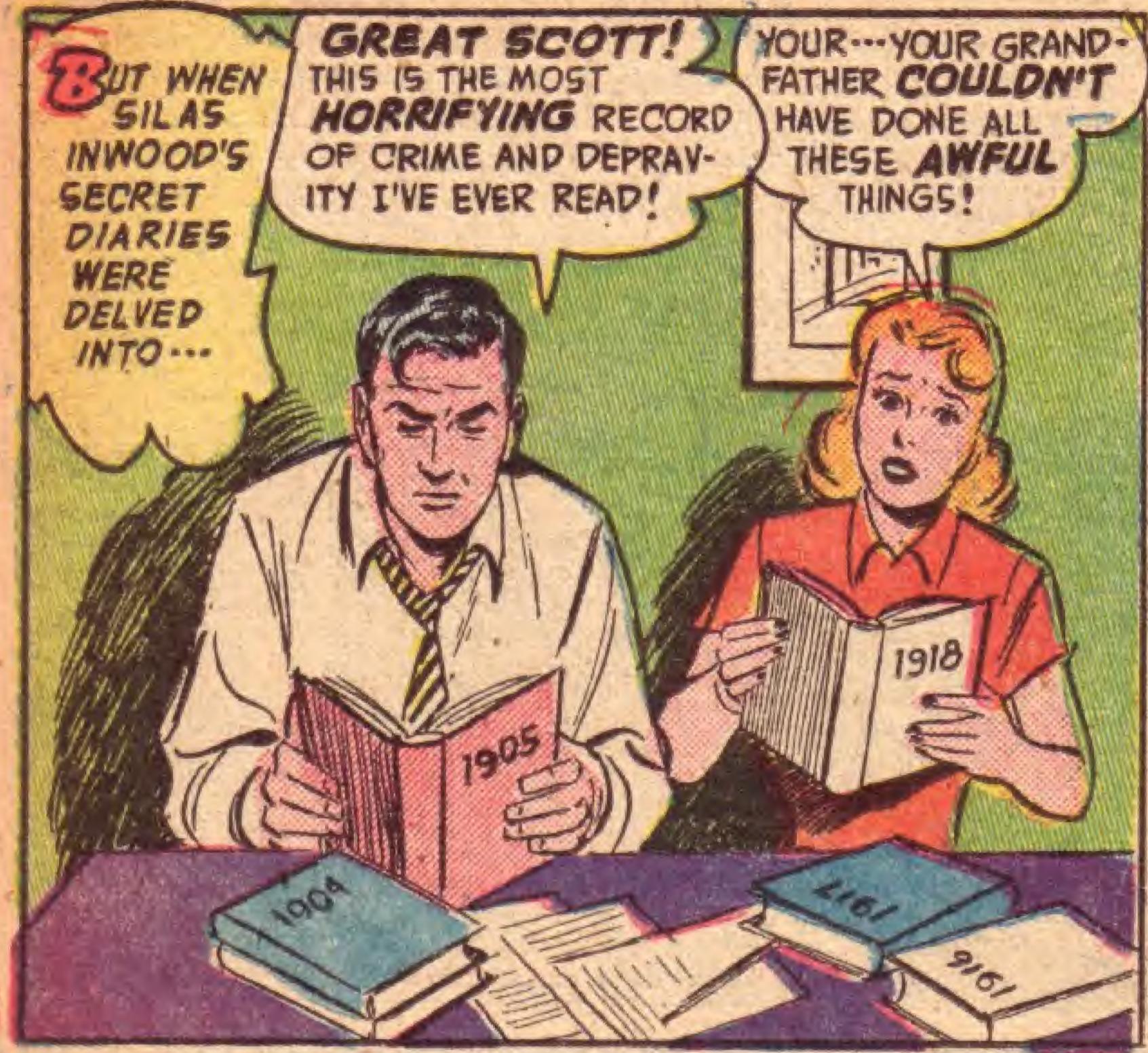
TELEPHONE

HELLO, FAY! I'VE
A JOB TO DO...
HOW ABOUT HELP-
ING ME WITH SOME
RESEARCH?

LAST
WILL
AND
TESTA-
MENT

AS YOUR PART-
TIME SECRETARY
AND FULL-TIME
FIANCEE, WHAT
ELSE CAN I DO?
...I'LL BE THERE!





THEN, AS THE SMOKE TAKES ON SUBSTANCE...

GRANDFATHER!

BUT...THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!

YOU'RE DEAD!

I WAS, BARRY... UNTIL YOU WROTE A BRILLIANT BOOK... A CLASSIC! WHEN PEOPLE SAY THAT CHARACTERS IN THE CLASSICS LIVE ON FOREVER, THEY DON'T KNOW HOW LITERALLY TRUE IT IS!

ALL IT TAKES IS A BIT OF BLACK MAGIC AND THE CORRECT INCANTATION--AND THOSE FICTIONAL AND LEGENDARY CHARACTERS WHO LIVE ON IN BOOKS CAN BE BROUGHT TO LIFE! AND NOW,

FOR BRINGING ME BACK FROM THE NETHER REGIONS, I WILL MAKE YOU AN EMPEROR ---WHILE I... I SHALL BE MASTER OF THE WORLD! WATCH!

THE BOOK OF WITCHCRAFT ---A MYSTIC INCANTATION---A SCENE OF MEDIEVAL WIZARDRY---

"O YE WHO LIVE ON IN BOOKS--I BID YE RISE IN THE NAME OF KURDOK THE MIGHTY!"

RISE, BLUEBEARD...

RISE, JACK THE RIPPER...



SILENTLY, FROM THE BOOKS THAT GAVE THEM LIFE, POURS FORTH A GRISLY HORDE... ALL OF THE ARCH-VILLAINS OF FACT AND FICTION THAT EVER TERRIFIED THE IMAGINATION!

RISE, CAPTAIN KIDD... SIR MODRED... BLACK KNIGHT... DRACULA!

I... I SEE IT... BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

OH, BARRY... IT... IT'S A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE... IT MUST BE!



WITH THE FRIGHTFUL HOST FINALLY ASSEMBLED...

WITH THIS INDESTRUCTIBLE ARMY OF EVIL, WE CAN CONQUER THE WORLD! ARE YOU WITH ME, MY BOY?

IF... IF ALL THIS IS REAL... THEN MY ANSWER IS NO!

THEN I MUST PLACE YOU WHERE YOU CAN'T INTERFERE! SEIZE THEM!

YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS, YOU OLD FIEND!



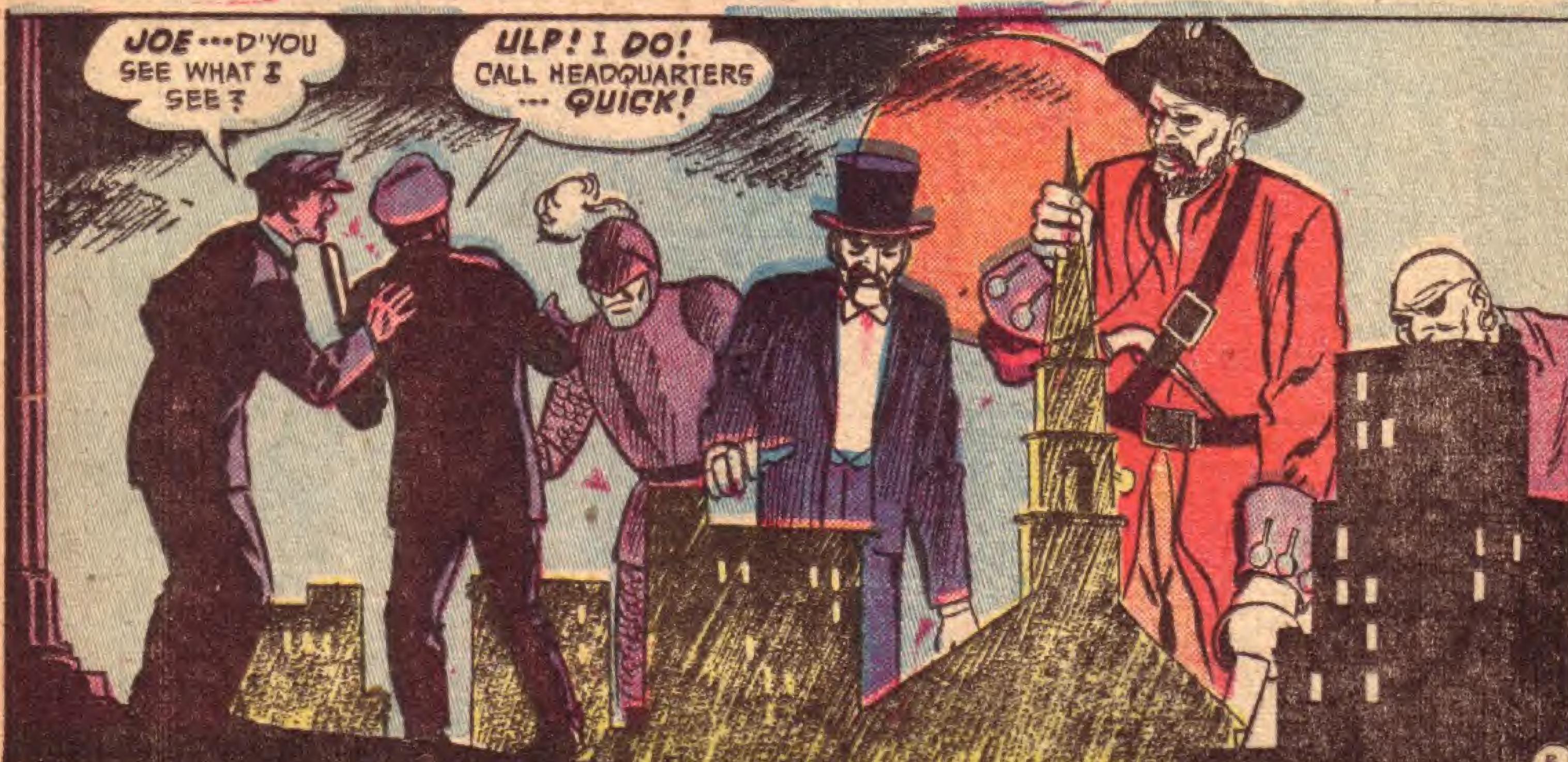
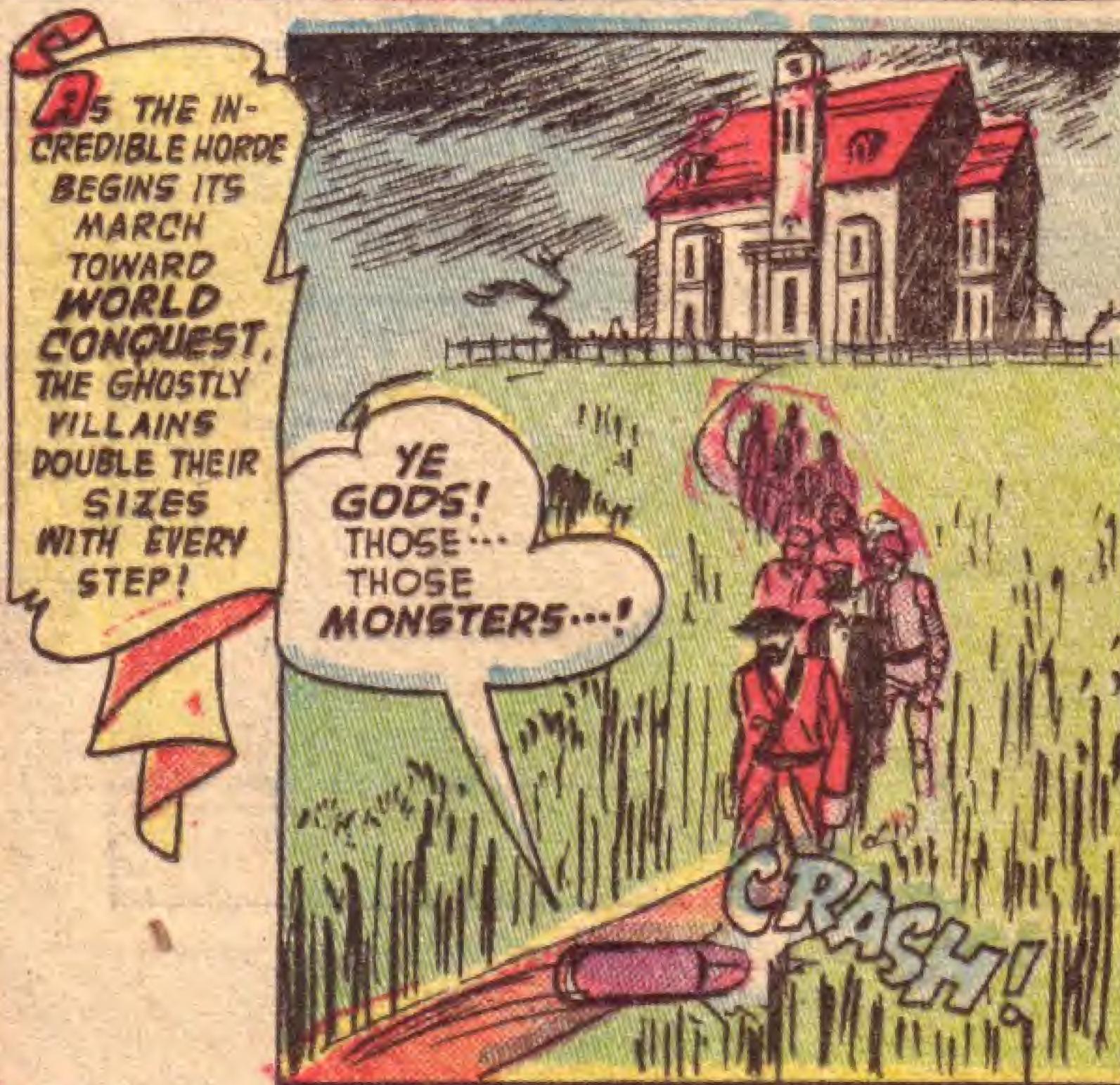
DOWN IN THE CLAMMY, DUNGEON-LIKE CELLAR OF THE INWOOD MANSION...

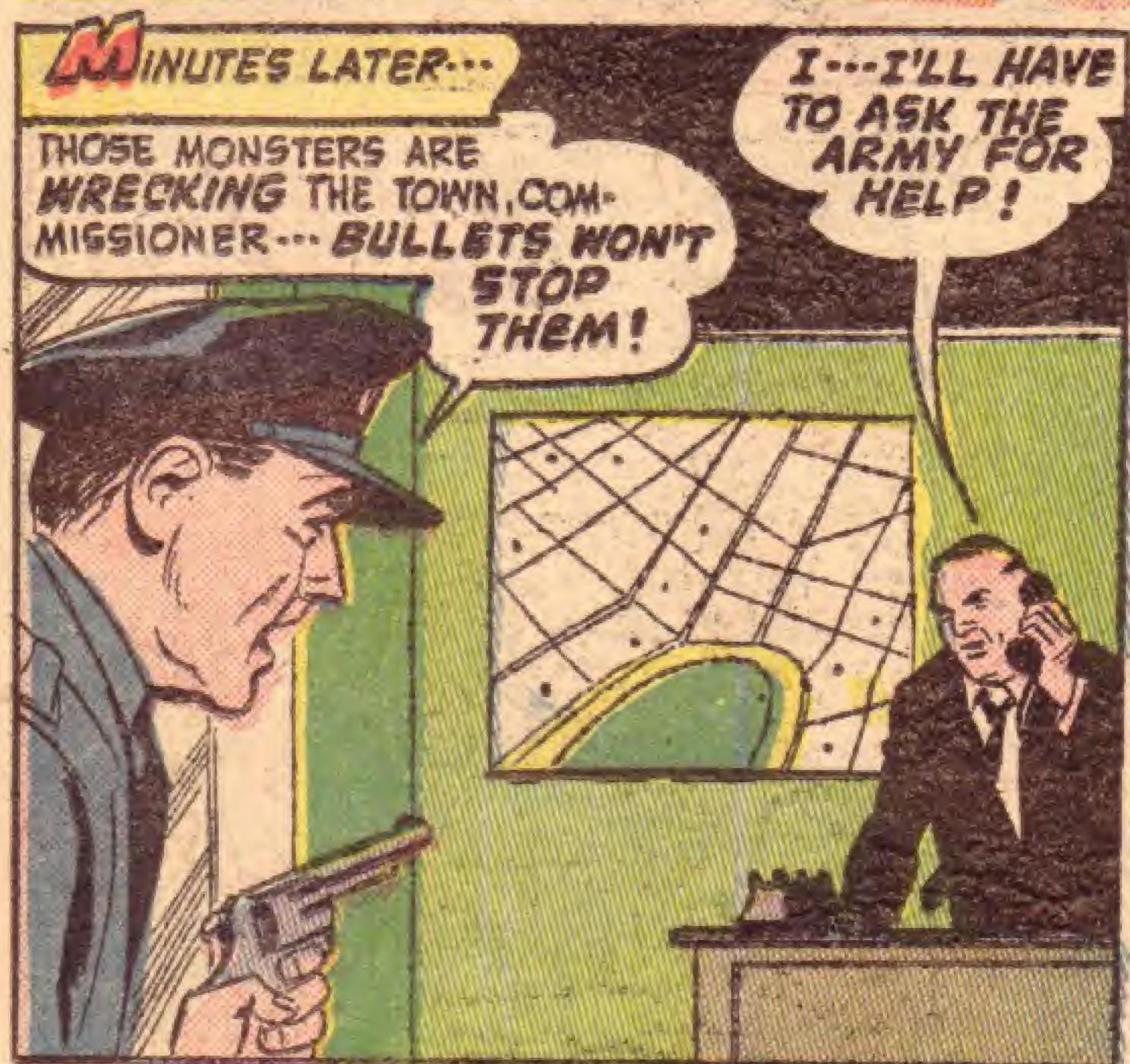
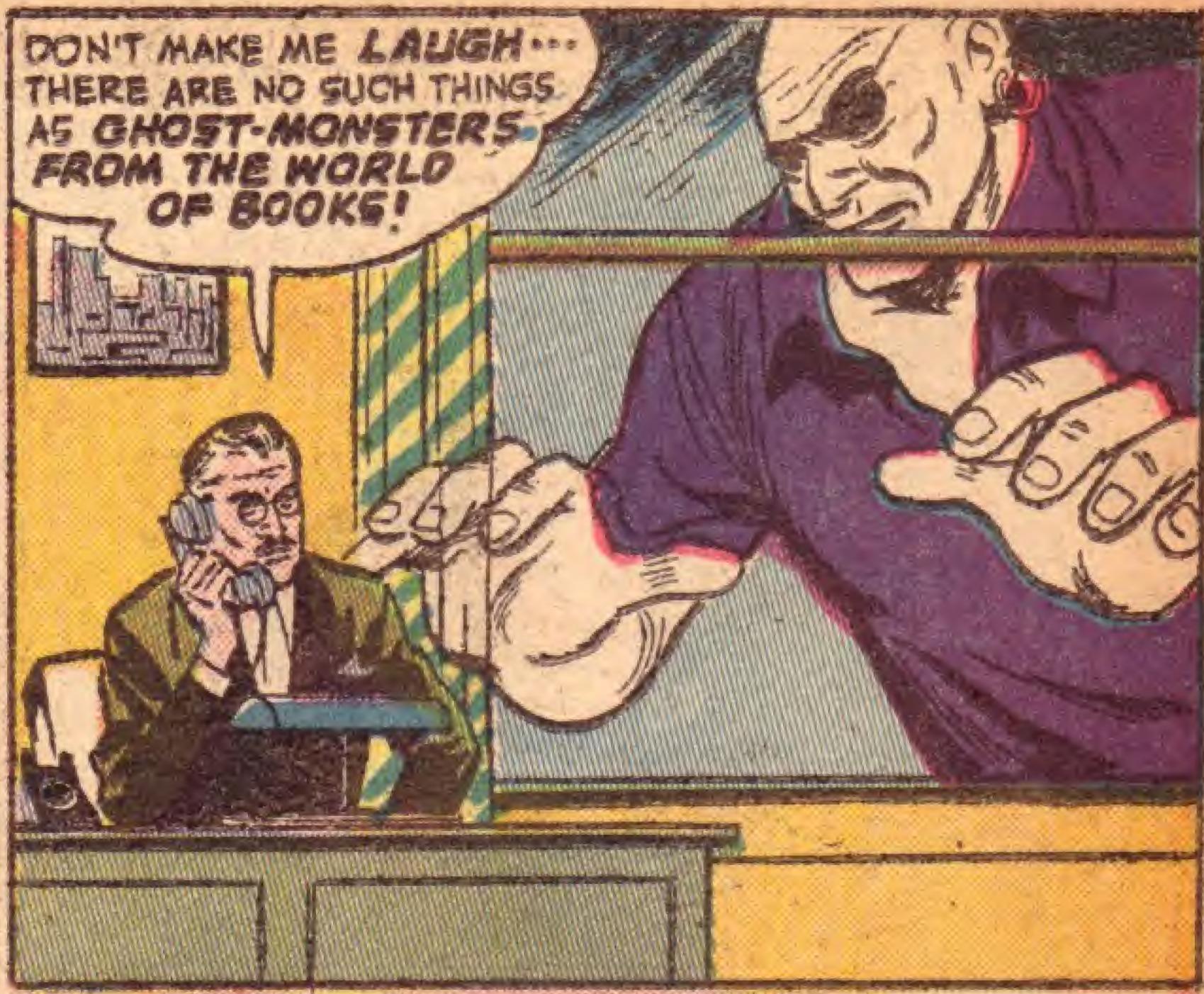
WHILE THE REST OF US GO FORTH TO CONQUER THE WORLD, YOU---DRACULA ---WILL GUARD THE PRISONERS!

IT WILL BE A PLEASURE, MASTER!

FAREWELL, MY FOOLISH FRIENDS--- WHEN NEXT YOU SEE THE OUTSIDE WORLD, IT WILL BE MINE ---ALL MINE!

OH, BARRY--- WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN?





MEANWHILE,
BACK IN THE
INWOOD
MANSION...

HA! WHAT GOOD FORTUNE
TO FIND SUCH A LOVELY
VICTIM ... SO SOON!

KEEP
BACK, YOU
FOUL
FIEND!

BUT WHAT GOOD IS MORTAL COURAGE AGAINST THE
POWER OF THE BLACKEST MAGIC?

BARRY...
HELP!

ASIDE, PUNY
HUMAN! SHE
IS MINE!

WHAM!

I ... I'M HELPLESS
AGAINST HIS SUPER-
NATURAL POWERS!
WAIT---THOSE CROSS-
ED SWORDS!

EVERISHLY
BREAKING
THE BLADE
OF ONE
OF THE
SWORDS,
BARRY
ADVANCES
WITH THE
ONE SYMBOL
THAT NO
SATANICAL
FIEND
CAN WITH-
STAND!

OH, BARRY---HE'S
DISAPPEAR-
ING!

THE ... THE SIGN! MY
STRENGTH IS EBBING...
BACK...I MUST GO
BACK!

HE'S GONE! NOW WE'VE
GOT WORK TO DO---COME
ON!

BUT BARRY...WHAT CAN WE
DO AGAINST THE REST OF
THOSE AWFUL GHOST-MONSTERS?
THEY MUST BE ALL OVER THE
CITY BY NOW!

I'VE GOT A PLAN! IF OLD
SILAS COULD HAVE SUMMONED
ALL THE VILLAINS OF LITERATURE
FROM THE WORLD OF BOOKS BY
RECITING A SORCERER'S INCANTATION,
THEN I CAN USE THE
SAME INCANTATION TO SUMMON
ALL THE GREAT HEROES OF
LITERATURE!

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE WRECKED TOWN...

WE'RE IN LUCK... THEY
HAVEN'T COMPLETELY
DESTROYED THE PUBLIC
LIBRARY YET! COME
ON!



I THINK I REMEMBER THE
INCANTATION..."O YE WHO
LIVE ON IN BOOKS, I BID
YE RISE IN THE NAME
OF KURDOCK THE MIGHTY!
RISE, IVANHOE! RISE,
SIR LANCELOT!"



AND LO!...
FROM THE
BATTERED
SHELVES STEP
FORTH ALL
THE NOBLE
HEROES
OF THE
GREAT
CLASSICS!

RISE, DON QUIXOTE...
PAUL BUNYAN...
ULYSSES... ROBIN
HOOD!

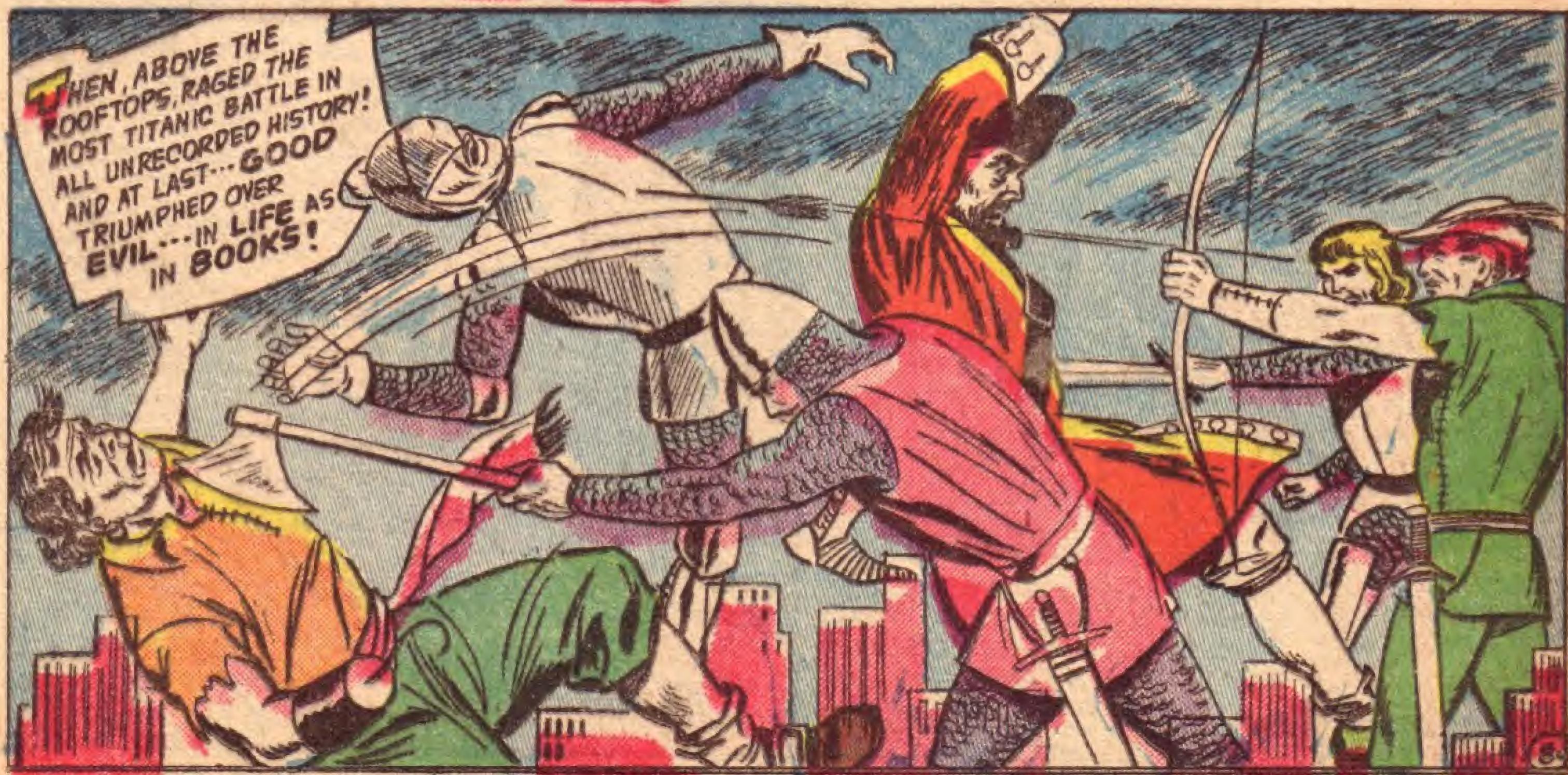
OH, BARRY
--- IT
WORKED!



AS SOON AS BARRY INFORMS THE HEROES
THAT THEIR AGE-OLD ADVERSARIES OF EVIL ARE
LOOSE IN THE WORLD...



THEN, ABOVE THE
ROOFTOPS, RAGED THE
MOST TITANIC BATTLE IN
ALL UNRECORDED HISTORY!
AND AT LAST... GOOD
TRIUMPHED OVER
EVIL... IN LIFE AS
IN BOOKS!



WITH THE BATTLE WON, THE HEROES OF LITERATURE RETURN TO THEIR BOOKS --- WHILE FAY AND BARRY SPEED BACK TO THE INWOOD MANSION! BUT THERE ...

BLAST YOU --- SO YOU'VE OUTWITTED ME, EH? FOR THAT YOU DIE!

OH, BARRY ... WE FORGOT ABOUT HIM!

WE ... WE'RE DOOMED! THERE'S NO ONE IN SILAS'S BIOGRAPHY WHO CAN DEFEAT HIM!

OH, YES THERE IS! --- "RISE, GRANDMA!"

AND OUT OF THE LIBRARY EMERGES THE ONE GHOST WHO CAN CONTROL SILAS INWOOD --- THE ONLY ONE HE WAS EVER TERRIFIED OF --- IN DEATH AS IN LIFE!

SILAS INWOOD! --- YOU COME RIGHT INSIDE THIS INSTANT, D'YOU HEAR?

MARTHA! N ... NO!

NOW GET BACK IN THERE AND STOP THIS NONSENSE! YOU'RE DEAD ... YOU DON'T BELONG IN THE WORLD OF THE LIVING! JUST WAIT TILL I GET YOU BACK WHERE YOU DO BELONG ...!

OWW! MY --- MY EAR! MARTHA ... PLEASE ...!

THEY'RE BOTH BACK WHERE THEY BELONG NOW! AND WHEN THIS BOOK ON WITCHCRAFT GOES UP IN FLAMES, NO ONE WILL EVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO SUMMON UP SILAS OR ANY OF THE FIENDISH VILLAINS OF LITERATURE!

THERE'S ONE THING YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S POWER OVER SILAS SHOULD HAVE TAUGHT YOU, DARLING --- NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A WOMAN!

WE ... OR OF A BIT OF BLACK MAGIC!

THE END!

CORPSE'S REVENGE

THE CORPSE OF Ethan Welles lay in the open coffin, fully dressed in black, and the lighted candles spread around the room cast flickering shadows over the dead face that seemed anything but at peace. And as the relatives of the dead man came into the house from the rainy streets to pay their respects one by one, each of them paused in his sorrowful thoughts to marvel at the tense, grim expression on the death-cold face...an expression which the most expert morticians in the city had striven in vain to soften or erase.

After all the relatives had walked past the body with bowed heads, they all assembled in the next room to await the arrival of the hearse and the funeral cars that would take them to the cemetery. The conversation was a morbid one, as was to be expected...and every now and then, one of the more emotional relatives would sob out, "But *why* was he murdered...who could have stabbed him so cold-bloodedly?"

Each time the question was asked, no one answered...but each one thought instantly, bitterly, of Halbert Welles, the profligate elder son of the deceased, who stood to inherit the bulk of Ethan Welles' vast fortune. Halbert was the black sheep of the family, a ne'er-do-well who spent all his time in carousing and gambling. But his father had blindly stuck to his belief that Halbert merely needed the responsibility of great wealth to settle down...and so had steadfastly refused to alter the terms of his will that gave the elder son more than three-fourths of the family millions.

No one, of course, could be certain that Halbert had committed patricide. The police, without any concrete evidence against Halbert, had released him...even though their investigations had revealed that he had amassed such a huge gambling debt that only an immediate inheritance of his father's fortune could have saved him from being taken for a one-way

tide by the vengeful gamblers who were his creditors.

But in the eyes of the other members of the Welles family, the surest sign of Halbert's guilt was that he hadn't even bothered showing up for the wake to pay his last respects to the father who had had such faith in him.

"I never credited Halbert with having a conscience," old Jeremiah Welles suddenly muttered broodingly, "but it can only be his guilty conscience that's keeping him away now!"

It was then that Abigail Welles, peering out the window toward the rain-swept street, said suddenly, "No, he *doesn't* have a conscience...for here he comes up the steps now!"

"I forbid anyone to go to greet him," growled Jeremiah. "Let him know the full weight of our suspicions."

All sat in the room tensely, listening to the front door opening. But one minute passed...two...three...and still they heard no sound of the door closing. After five minutes had passed, Jeremiah Welles arose and strode grimly to the door of the parlor, saying, "He's probably drunk again...must have collapsed on the stoop before he could even get inside."

The others all followed Jeremiah...and all gasped as they saw the crumpled body lying in the open doorway, half inside the house and half lying on the wet stoop outside. Jeremiah bent over the body, turned it over...and there was a collective gasp of horror as all saw the expression of terror and agony on the dead, slightly blue face.

"Strangled!" Jeremiah said incredulously. "But who...?"

"Look!" cried Abigail. "Look at the soles of Ethan's shoes! They...they're wet...as if he'd just walked out onto the wet stoop!"

All turned to look at the corpse in the coffin...and stared in awe as their eyes went from the wet shoes to the now peaceful, smiling face of the dead man.

SHIP of DEATH



THE S.S. NEPTUNE WAS JUST AN ORDINARY FREIGHTER, COMMANDED BY A TYPICAL HARD-FISTED SKIPPER -- OR SO FIRST MATE GEORGE PROCTOR THOUGHT WHEN HE SHIPPED ABOARD HER! BUT HE WAS SOON TO LEARN THAT CAPTAIN KROCK'S WARPED BRAIN HAD DEVISED A DIABOLICAL PLAN TO BRING DOWN A REIGN OF WEIRD TERROR ON THE NEPTUNE AND TURN IT INTO A **SHIP OF DEATH**!

ALL DURING THE VOYAGE FROM NEW YORK, FIRST MATE GEORGE PROCTOR HAD BEEN AWARE OF THE MUTTERING AND UNREST ON THE PART OF THE CREW! THE S.S. NEPTUNE HAD BARELY DOCKED AT THE WEST INDIES PORT OF SAN CARLOS WHEN THE COMPLAINTS FLARED INTO THE OPEN!

WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, MEN?

WE AIN'T GONNA STAND BEIN' KICKED AROUND BY THE CAPTAIN NO MORE!

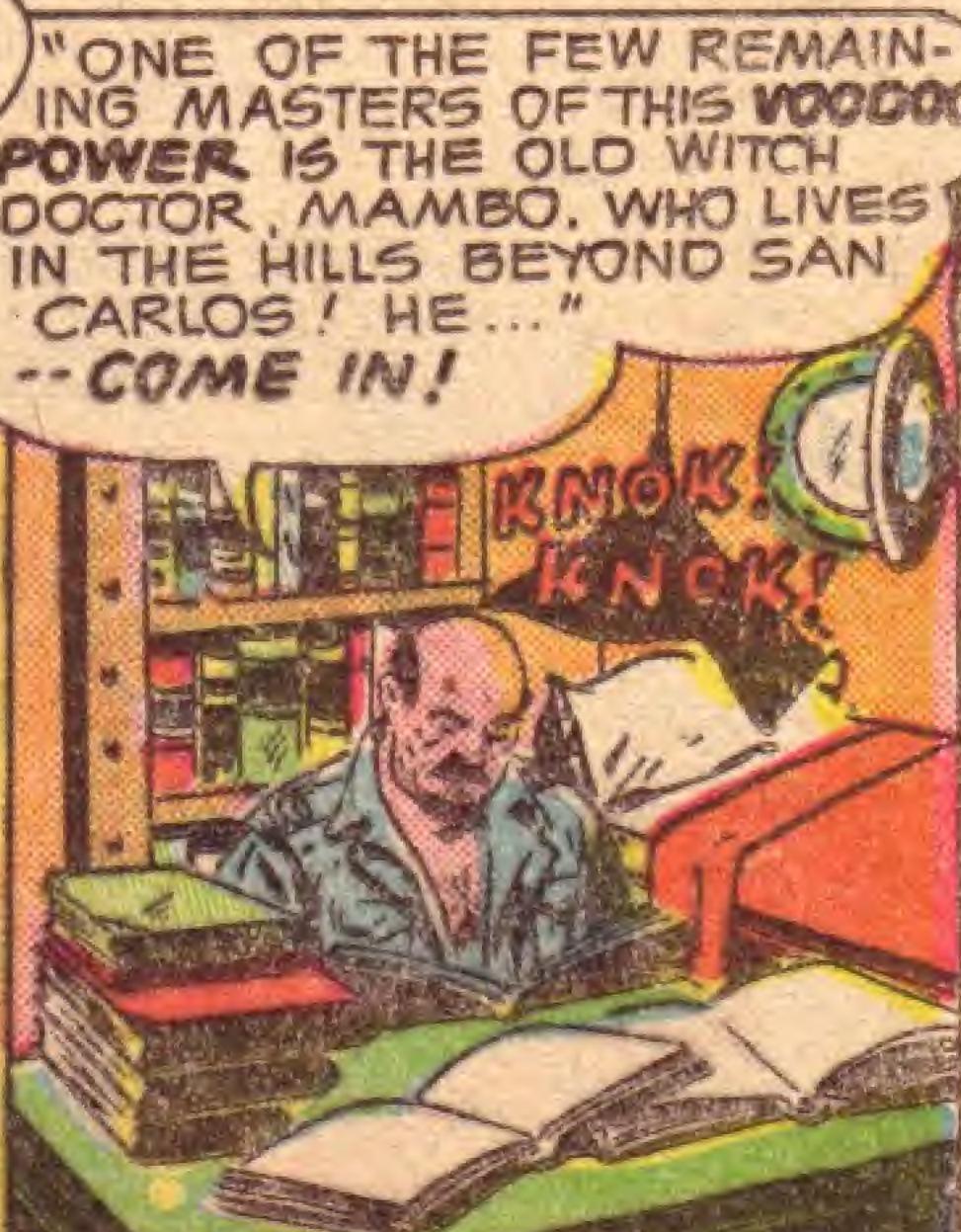
EITHER WE GET BETTER TREATMENT-- OR WE'RE STRIKIN'!

CALL THE SKIPPER, MATE -- WE WANT TO TALK TO HIM! HE'S PROBABLY IN HIS CABIN, READIN' THEM SPOOKY BOOKS OF HIS!

YES, CAPTAIN KROCK WAS IN HIS CABIN -- IMMERSSED IN ONE OF HIS MANY VOLUMES DEALING WITH THE OCCULT! HIS EYES GLEAMED WITH A STRANGE LIGHT AS HE READ--

"ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING MASTERS OF THIS **VOODOO** POWER IS THE OLD WITCH DOCTOR, MAMBO, WHO LIVES IN THE HILLS BEYOND SAN CARLOS! HE..."

--COME IN!



THE CREW'S
COMPLAINING
ABOUT THEIR
TREATMENT,
CAPTAIN KROCK!
THEY WANT TO
SPEAK TO
YOU!

I'LL SPEAK TO
THEM -- IN A
WAY THEY'LL
UNDERSTAND!

I'LL HAVE NO MUTINY ABOARD MY
SHIP! NEXT TIME I'LL USE MY
GUN -- YOU DOGS!



A SHORT WHILE LATER--

THEY'RE QUITTING
THE SHIP, SIR--
EVERY MAN-JACK
OF THEM!

LET 'EM!
LET 'EM
STAY
ASHORE
AND ROT!

BUT WE'RE HELPLESS WITH-

OUT A
CREW!

IT WAS A STRANGE MISSION--
FAR INTO THE HILLS BEYOND
SAN CARLOS--

I'LL GET A CREW!
STAY ABOARD,
PROCTOR, UNTIL I
GET BACK-- WITH
THE BEST CREW
A CAPTAIN
EVER HAD!

NEVER MIND WHAT
I WANT WITH
MAMBO! TELL
ME WHERE
HE LIVES!

BACK--
THERE--

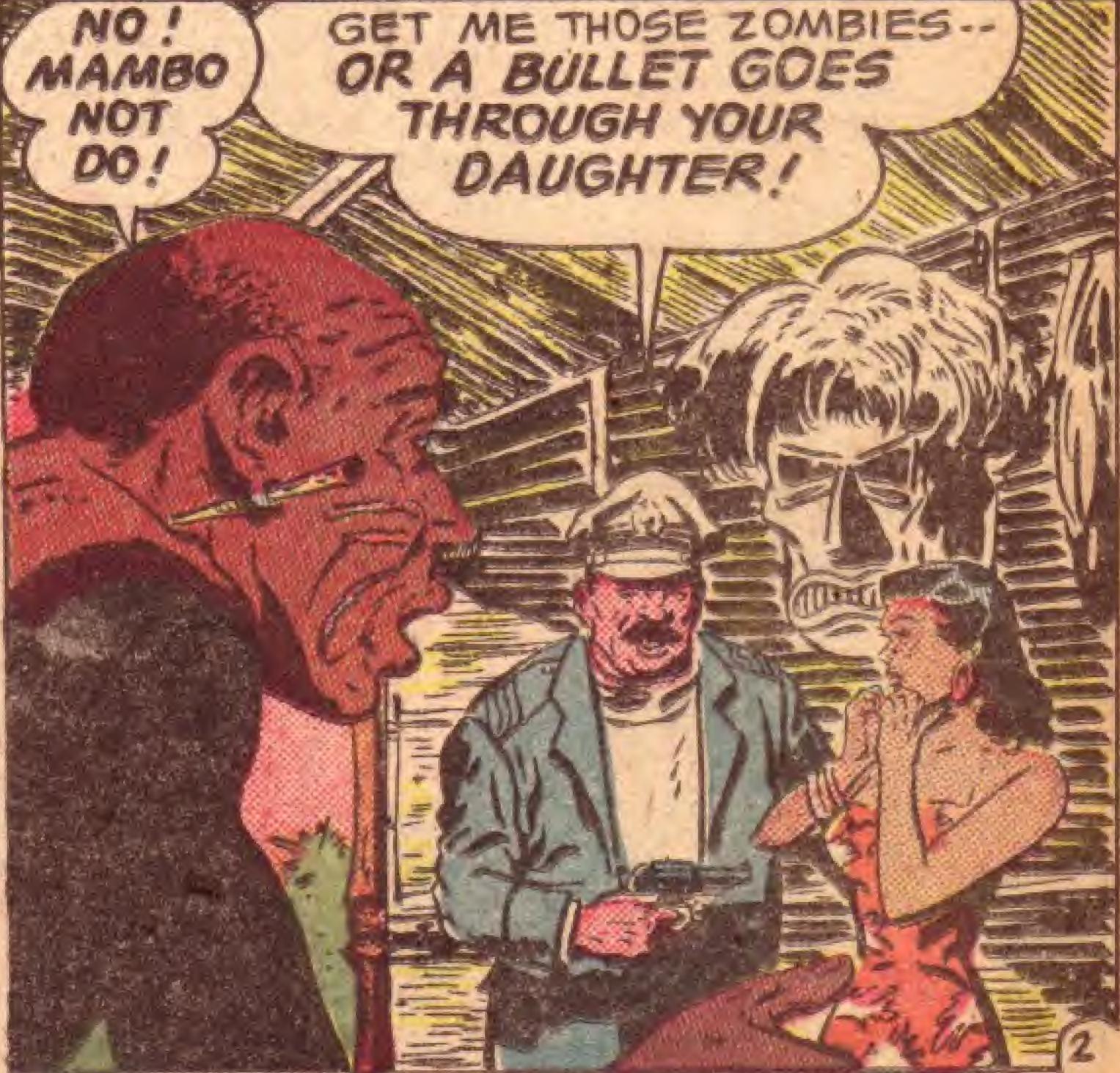


YES, I AM
MAMBO--
WITCH
DOCTOR!
WHY DO
YOU SEEK
ME?

THEY SAY YOU HAVE THE POWER
TO MAKE THE DEAD COME
BACK... AND I'D LIKE TO
MAKE A DEAL WITH YOU!
I NEED A CREW FOR MY
SHIP-- A CREW OF ZOMBIES!
I'LL PAY YOU WELL!

NO!
MAMBO
NOT
DO!

GET ME THOSE ZOMBIES--
OR A BULLET GOES
THROUGH YOUR
DAUGHTER!



THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE FOR MAMBO--
BUT SURRENDER!

I--I DO!
FOLLOW
ME!

GO ALONG, SISTER--
I'M NOT TAKING
ANY CHANCES!

THEN, A WEIRD INCANTATION-- WITH
WEIRDER RESULTS!

OH, KALARI-- GOD OF LIFE BEYOND LIFE!
IN NAME OF MYSTIC TALISMAN--
MAKE THEM RISE!

GREAT
THUNDER-
BOLTS!

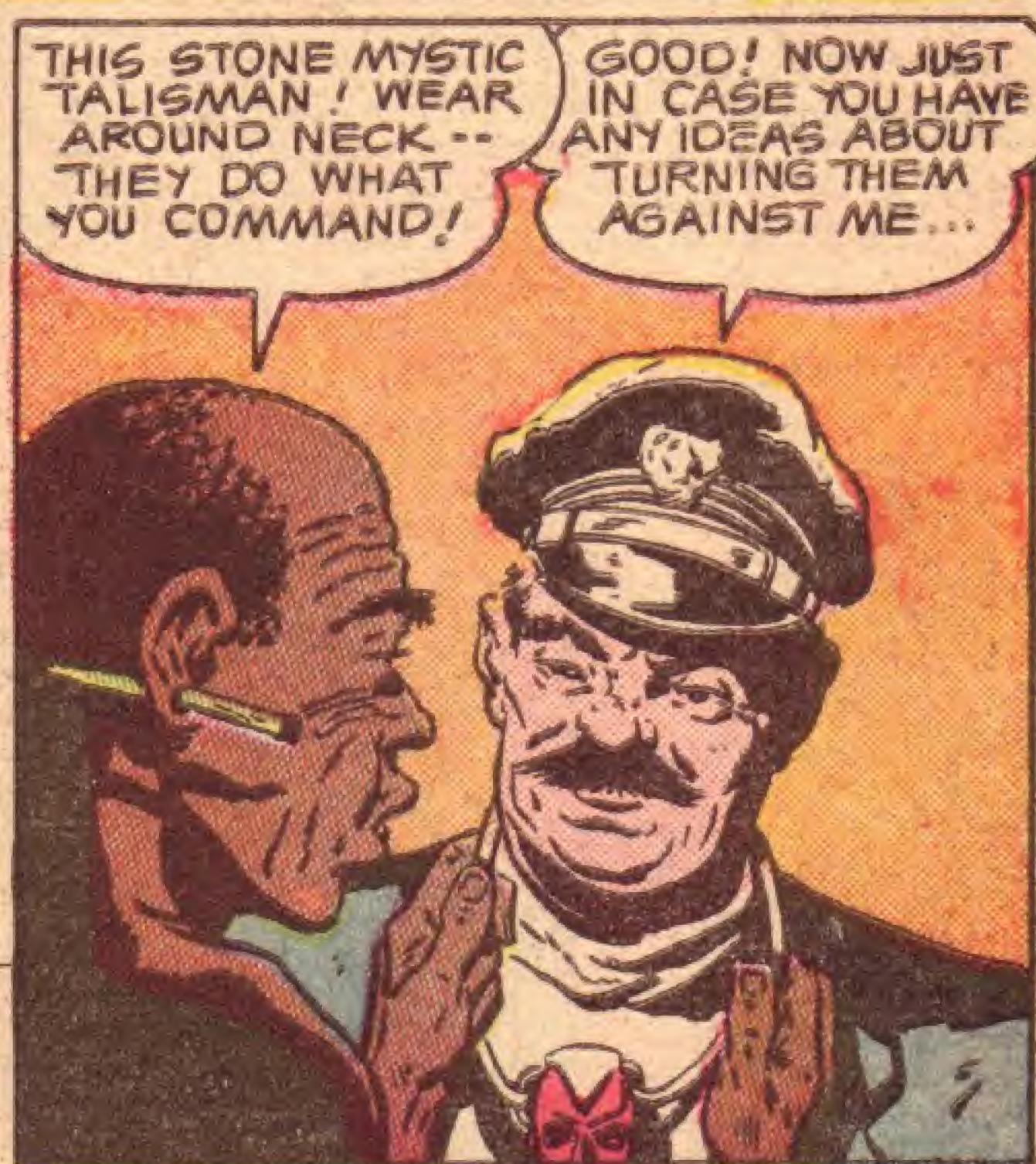


I HAVE CALLED
UP THE DEAD!
RELEASE MY
DAUGHTER!

WAIT! FIRST TELL
ME HOW TO KEEP
THESE THINGS
UNDER MY
CONTROL!

THIS STONE MYSTIC
TALISMAN! WEAR
AROUND NECK--
THEY DO WHAT
YOU COMMAND!

GOOD! NOW JUST
IN CASE YOU HAVE
ANY IDEAS ABOUT
TURNING THEM
AGAINST ME...



ON THE OPEN SEA --

THEY SURE OBEY
COMMANDS AND NO
QUESTIONS ASKED...

HEY! LOOK
OUT!

GREAT HEAVENS!
THERE'S NO HEART
BEAT! HE'S BEEN
KILLED!

KILLED--YET TO PROCTOR'S
AMAZEMENT, THE MAN ROSE,
SHAMBLED OFF!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
HE WAS DEAD!
HIS HEART HAD
STOPPED!

OF COURSE
HE WAS DEAD!
HAS BEEN
FOR YEARS!
THEY'RE
ALL DEAD...
THEY'RE
ZOMBIES!

ZOMBIES!
YES! I WENT UP INTO THE HILLS,
AND...AH... PERSUADED A WITCH
DOCTOR TO PROVIDE ME WITH
A PERFECT CREW! THEY
NEVER COMPLAIN, THEY
DON'T EAT OR SLEEP...
AND THEY **OBEY!**

DON'T LOOK SO UPSET,
MR. PROCTOR! YOU'LL
SOON GET USED TO
THE IDEA! AND
TOGETHER, WE'LL
MAKE A FORTUNE!

THIS IS HORRIBLE!
BUT THERE'S
NOTHING I CAN
DO BUT PLAY
ALONG WITH HIM
UNTIL WE REACH
THE NEXT PORT!

EARLY NEXT DAY--

VESSEL TO
STARBOARD,
CAPTAIN!
FLYING
SIGNAL OF
DISTRESS!

EXCELLENT! HER RADIO
MUST BE OUT OF COM-
MISSION, OR WE WOULD
HAVE HEARD HER SIGNAL!
THIS IS THE CHANCE I'VE
BEEN WAITING FOR--
OUR CHANCE TO START
MAKING THAT **FORTUNE**,
PROCTOR!

WHEN WE COME ALONGSIDE, YOU MEN WILL
BOARD THAT SHIP! YOU WILL BRING BACK ALL
THE MONEY YOU CAN FIND! THERE IS LIKELY
A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT LOCKED IN HER
SAFE--OPEN IT! KILL ANYONE WHO
RESISTS! SCUTTLE THE SHIP BEFORE
YOU LEAVE!

THAT'S MURDER!
AND PIRACY!

YOU'RE
STARK,
RAVING
MAD!

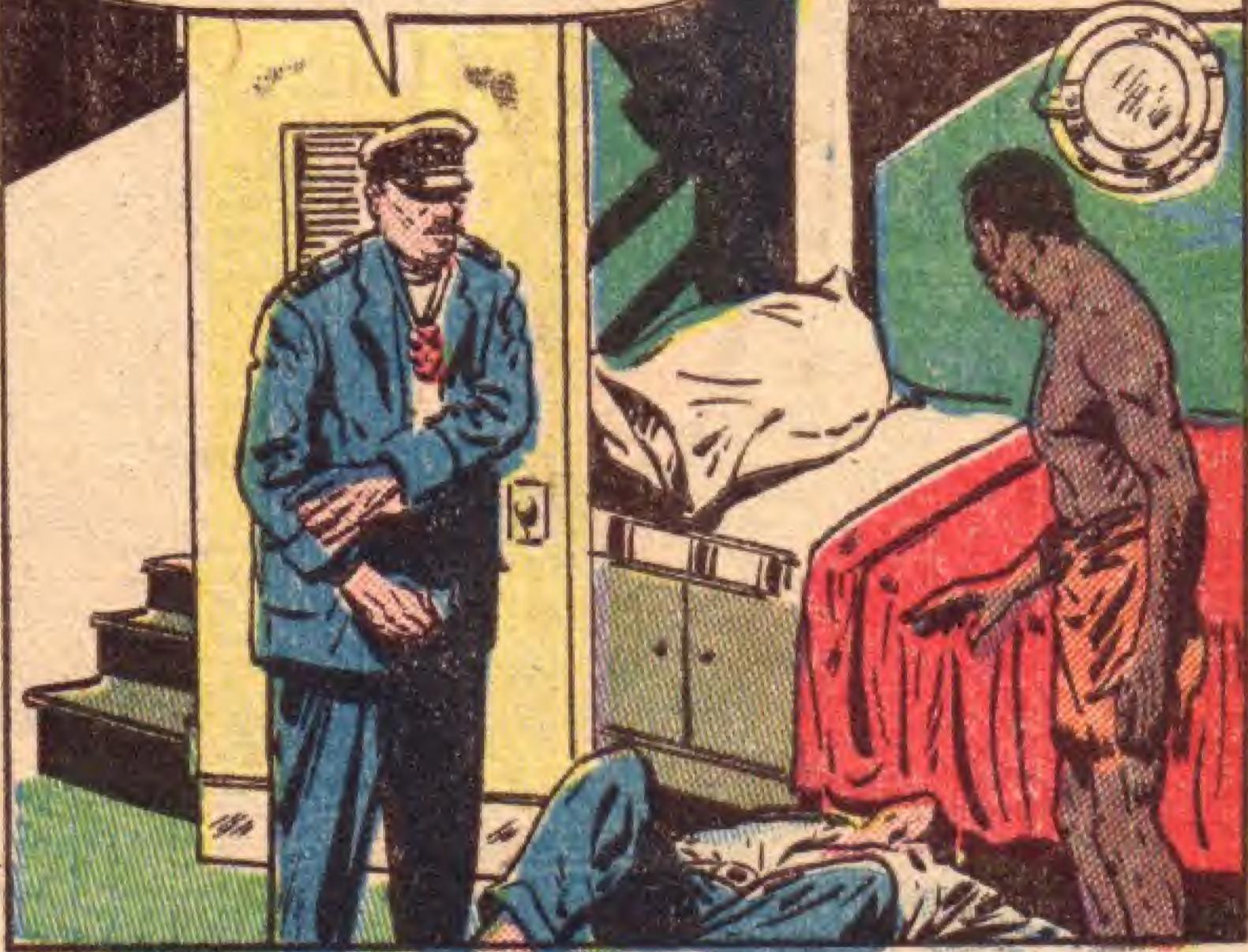
SEIZE HIM! THROW
HIM IN HIS CABIN!



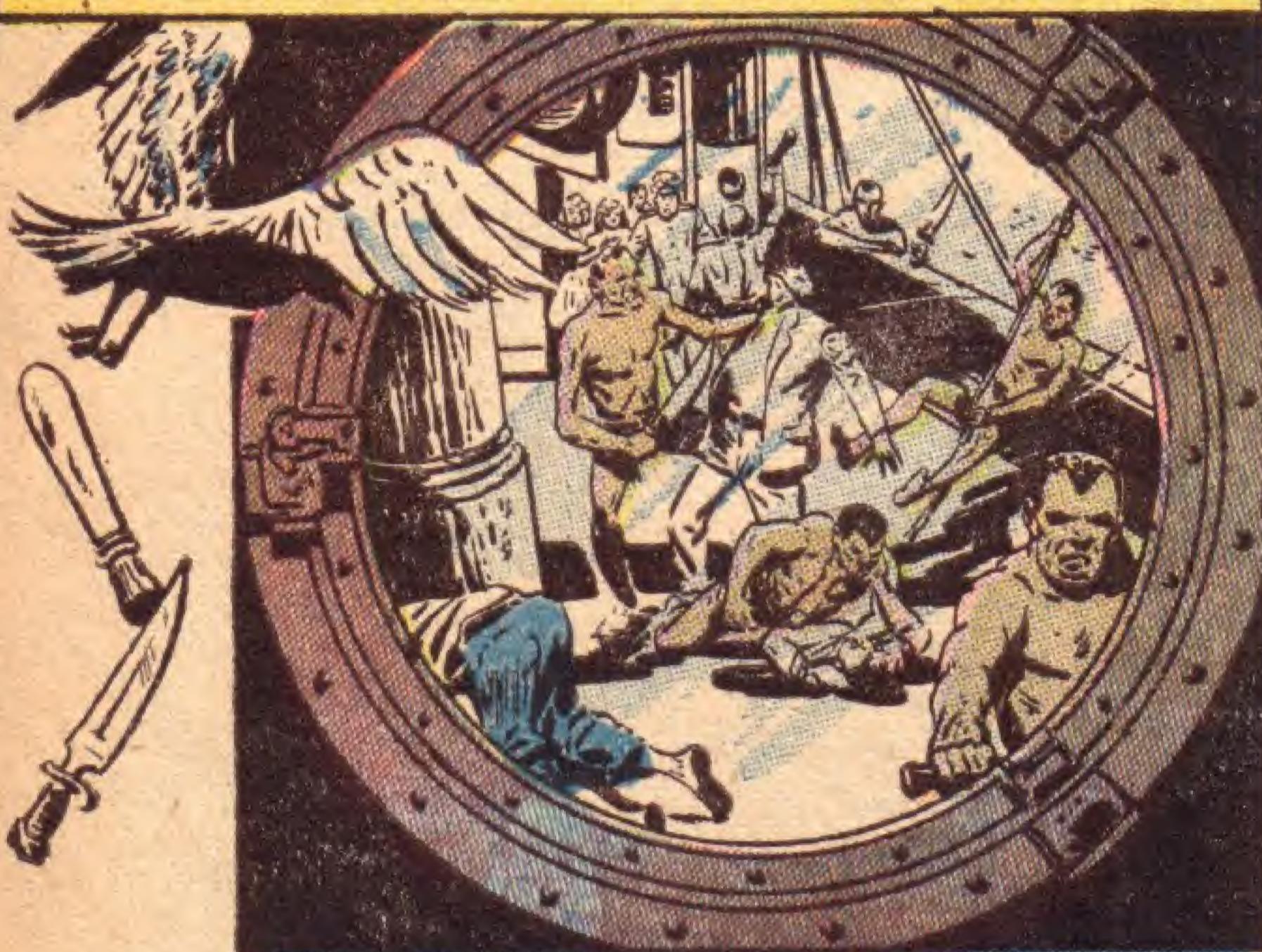
POW!

IN THE GRIP OF TWO ZOMBIES, PROCTOR'S
WILD STRUGGLES WERE FUTILE!

BREAK HIS NECK IF HE TRIES
TO ESCAPE! I'LL DEAL
WITH HIM LATER!



HELPLESS, PROCTOR WATCHED THROUGH A Porthole
AS CAPTAIN KROCK'S MURDEROUS PLAN PROCEEDED!



THIS IS JUST A SAMPLE OF
WHAT YOU'LL GET, YOU WHITE-
LIVERED FOOL! I'M GOING
TO KEEP YOU ALIVE SO YOU
CAN WATCH SHIP AFTER
SHIP ATTACKED AND DE-
STROYED! YOU'LL
BE BEATEN UNTIL
YOU FINALLY PRAY
FOR DEATH!
NOBODY
CROSSES
CAPTAIN
KROCK!

EVERY
LAST BIT
OF SANITY
HAS LEFT HIM!
IF I COULD
ONLY STOP
THIS PIRACY!

DAYS GREW INTO WEEKS AS THE
BLOODTHIRSTY SKIPPER OF THE
NEPTUNE USED HIS DEAD MEN
TO ATTACK, ROB, AND DESTROY
SHIP AFTER SHIP! AND AFTER
EVERY FORAY, THE MANIACAL
CAPTAIN KROCK VISITED HIS
CAPTIVE MATE --

ANOTHER GREAT HAUL,
PROCTOR! AND HERE'S
YOUR PAYMENT!



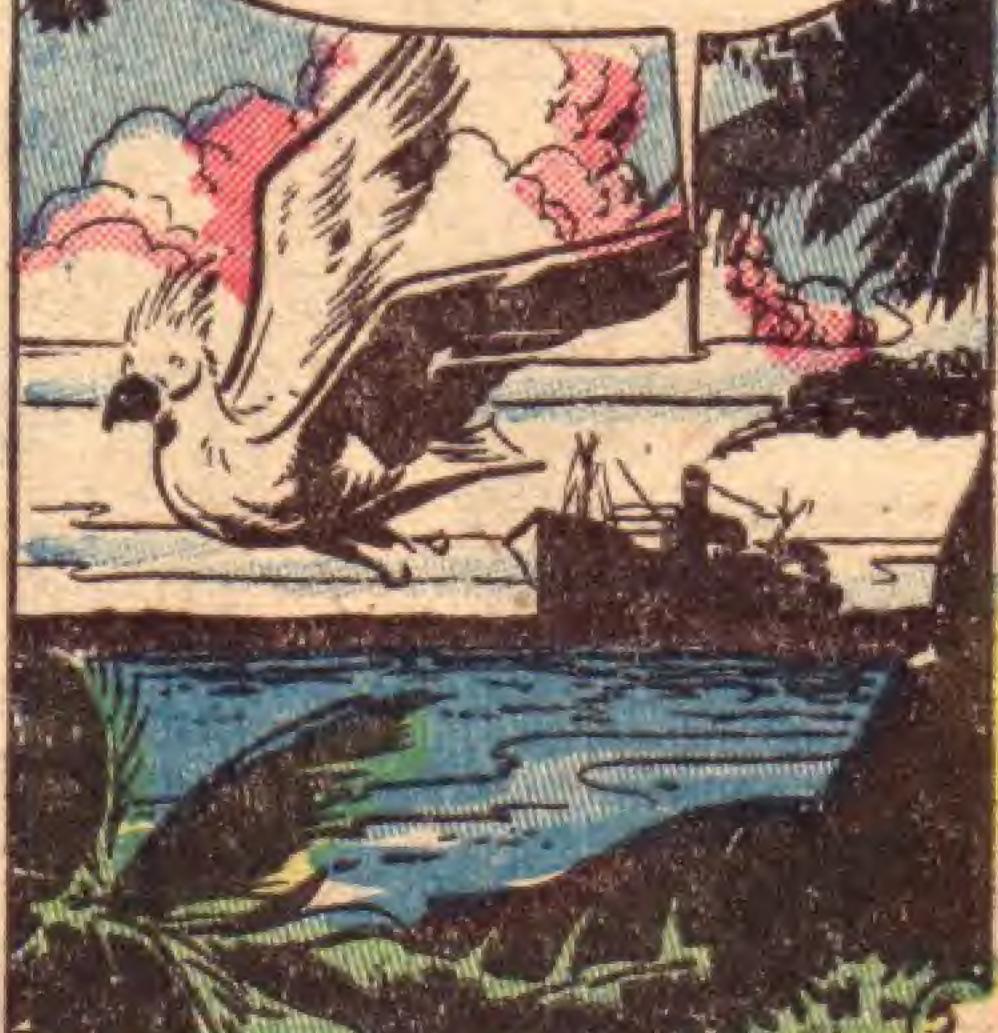
LEAVING THE LOOTED SHIP SINKING
WITH ALL ABOARD, THE S.S.
NEPTUNE PROCEEDED ON HER WAY!

OVER THIRTY THOUSAND IN THAT
SAFE, PROCTOR!... AS FOR YOU,
YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR
RESISTING ME! HOLD
HIM, ZOMBIE!



FINALLY, THE SHIP STEAMED
INTO A DESERTED COVE
ACROSS THE ISLAND
FROM SAN CARLOS--

LOWER THE ANCHOR!
WE'LL LIE LOW HERE
FOR AWHILE!







DAWN FOUND GEORGE AND THE NATIVE GIRL CROUCHED IN THE HEAVY FOLIAGE NEAR THE SHORE--

THE NEPTUNE'S PULLED UP ANCHOR! SHE'S LEAVING!

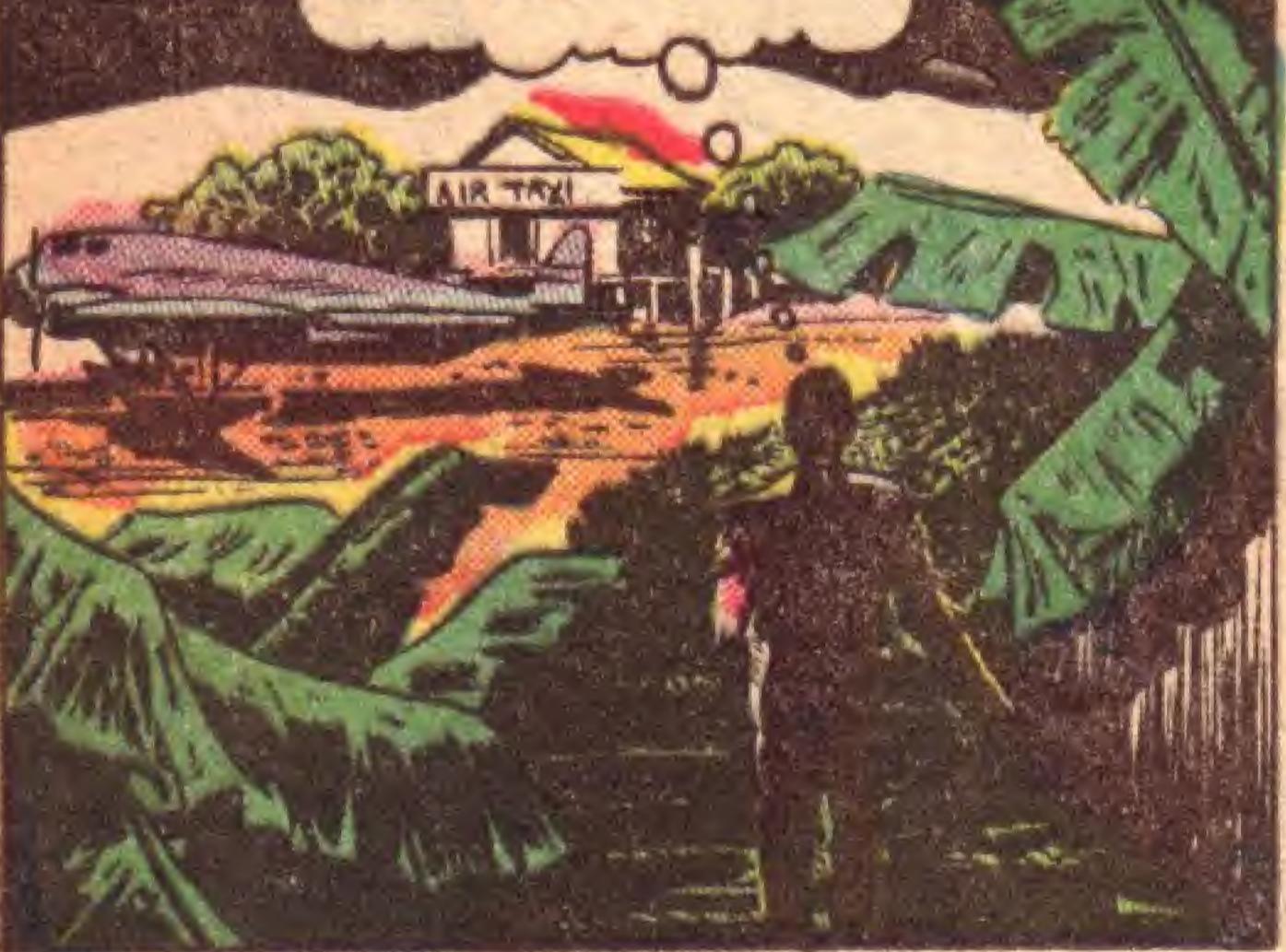
I'VE FAILED-- HE WILL ESCAPE!

NO, HE WON'T! MY FATHER GAVE WHITE MAN A JEWEL-STONE TO WEAR ABOUT HIS NECK! HE WHO WEARS JEWEL, THE ZOMBIES WILL OBEY!



A PLAN RAPIDLY TOOK FORM IN PROCTOR'S BRAIN! LEAVING THE GIRL, HE TRAVELED ACROSS THE ISLAND TO SAN CARLOS--

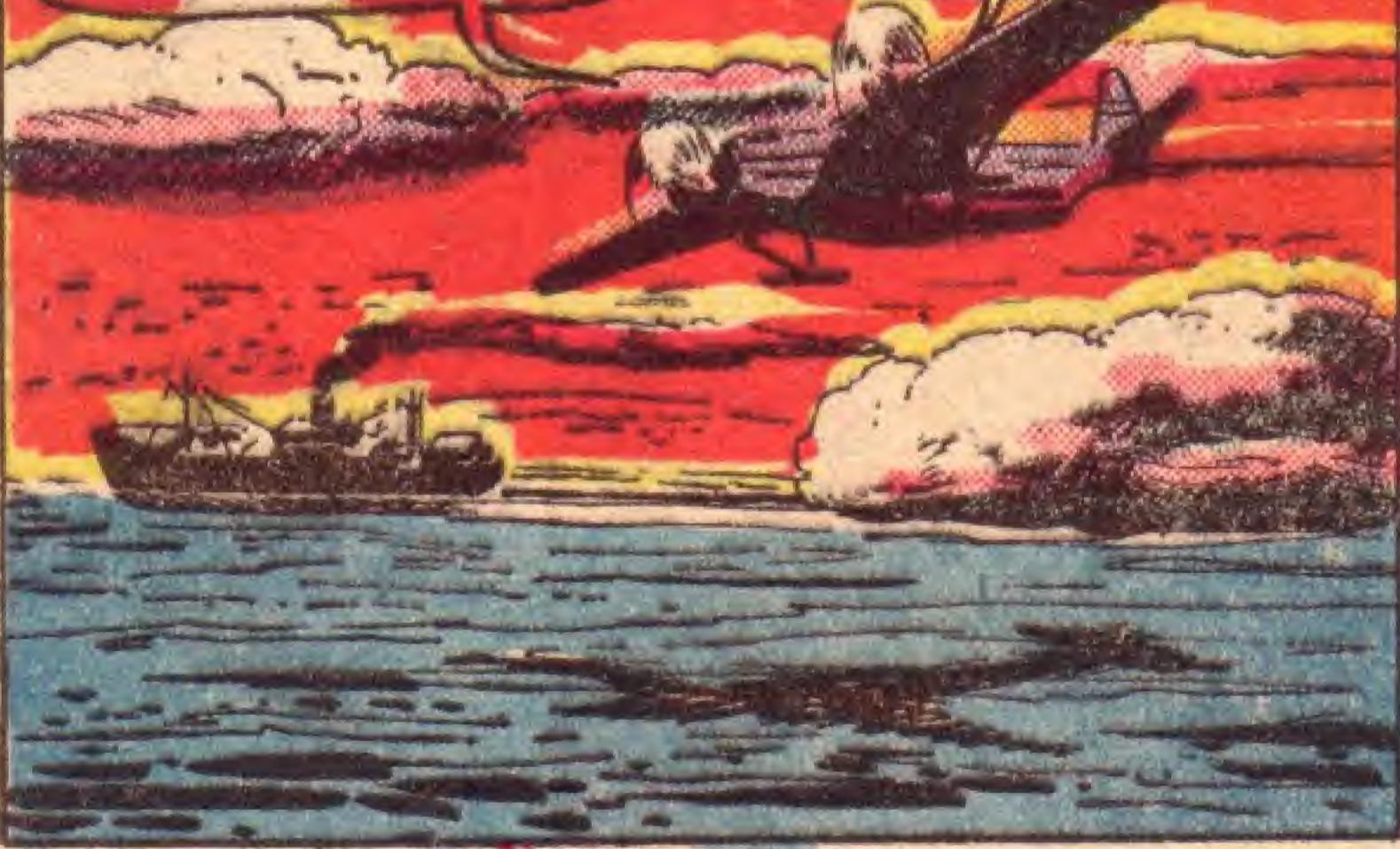
THAT JEWEL HE WEARS AROUND HIS NECK... IF I CAN JUST GET BACK ABOARD THE NEPTUNE...



NEGOTIATIONS FOR A FLIGHT AND THE PURCHASE OF A PARACHUTE AND PORTABLE RUBBER RAFT WERE SOON COMPLETED--

THAT'S THE SHIP! SOON AS IT GETS DARK, GET WELL AHEAD OF HER-- AND OUT I GO!

SOUNDS LIKE RISKY BUSINESS TO ME, MISTER! BUT IF YOU WANT IT THAT WAY, OKAY!



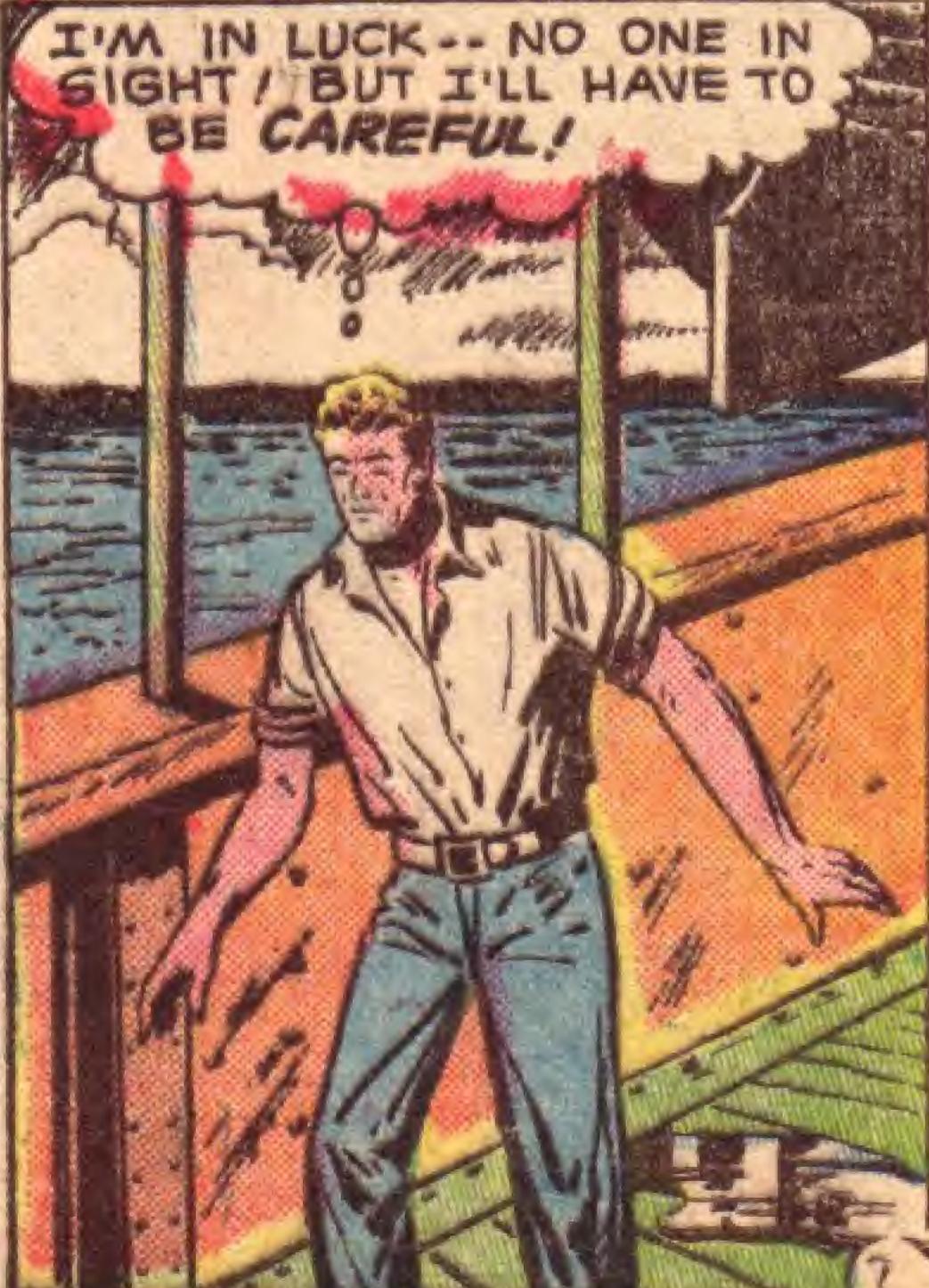
WHEN THE VELVET OF NIGHT COVERED THE SKY--



SO FAR, SO GOOD!
NOW TO BOARD HER!



I'M IN LUCK-- NO ONE IN SIGHT! BUT I'LL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL!



EVERY NERVE TENSE, PROCTOR MOVED
LIKE A SHADOW ALONG THE DESERTED
DECK TO THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN --

HE'S
ASLEEP!

OOPS!
THAT
DOES
IT!

OOO

BAM!

WHAT WAS
THAT?...YOU!

ALL HANDS! GET HERE--
ON THE DOUBLE!

REALIZING THAT AT ANY MOMENT
THE SWARM OF ZOMBIES WOULD
ARRIVE, PROCTOR SLASHED
INTO CAPTAIN KROCK, TRYING
FRANTICALLY TO GET HOLD OF
THE TALISMAN JEWEL!

SOK!

KILL
HIM!

ONE LAST SUPREME EFFORT--AND PROCTOR'S
CLUTCHING FINGERS FASTENED ON
THE VITAL JEWEL!

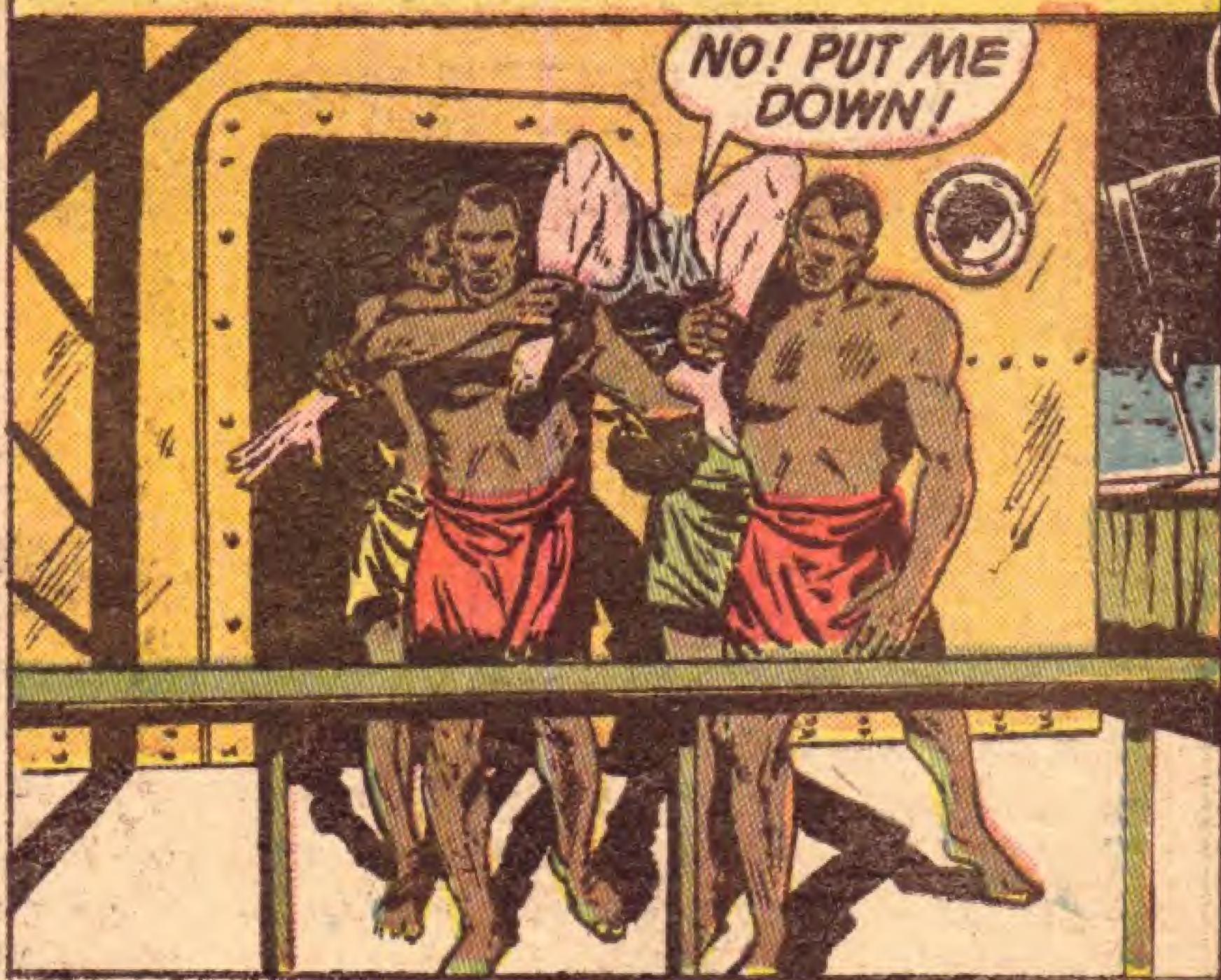
THROW HIM
OVERBOARD!

GOT IT!

NOT ME!
SEIZE
HIM!



THEN, SCARCELY BEFORE THE CAPTAIN KNEW
WHAT WAS HAPPENING...

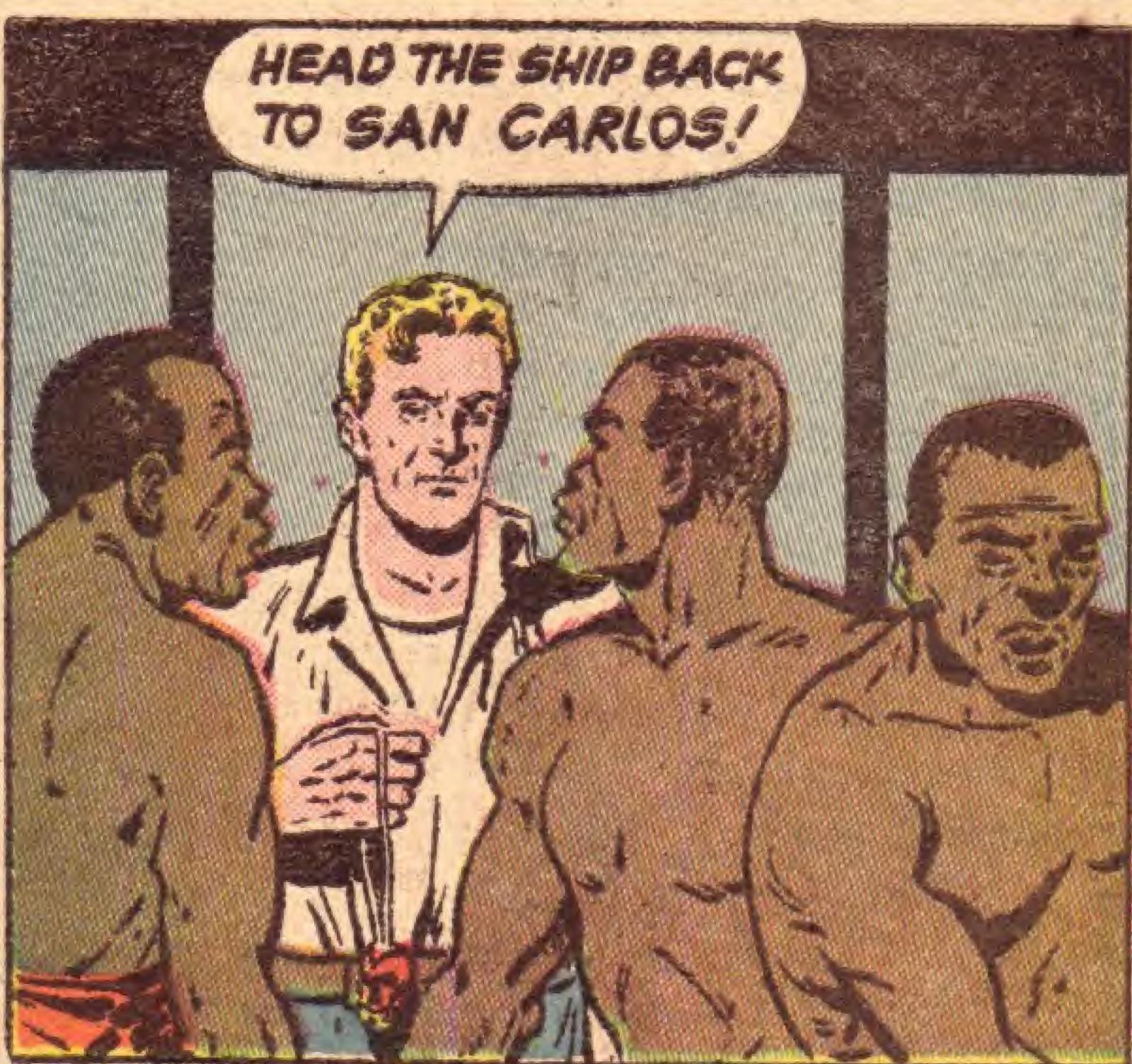


NO!



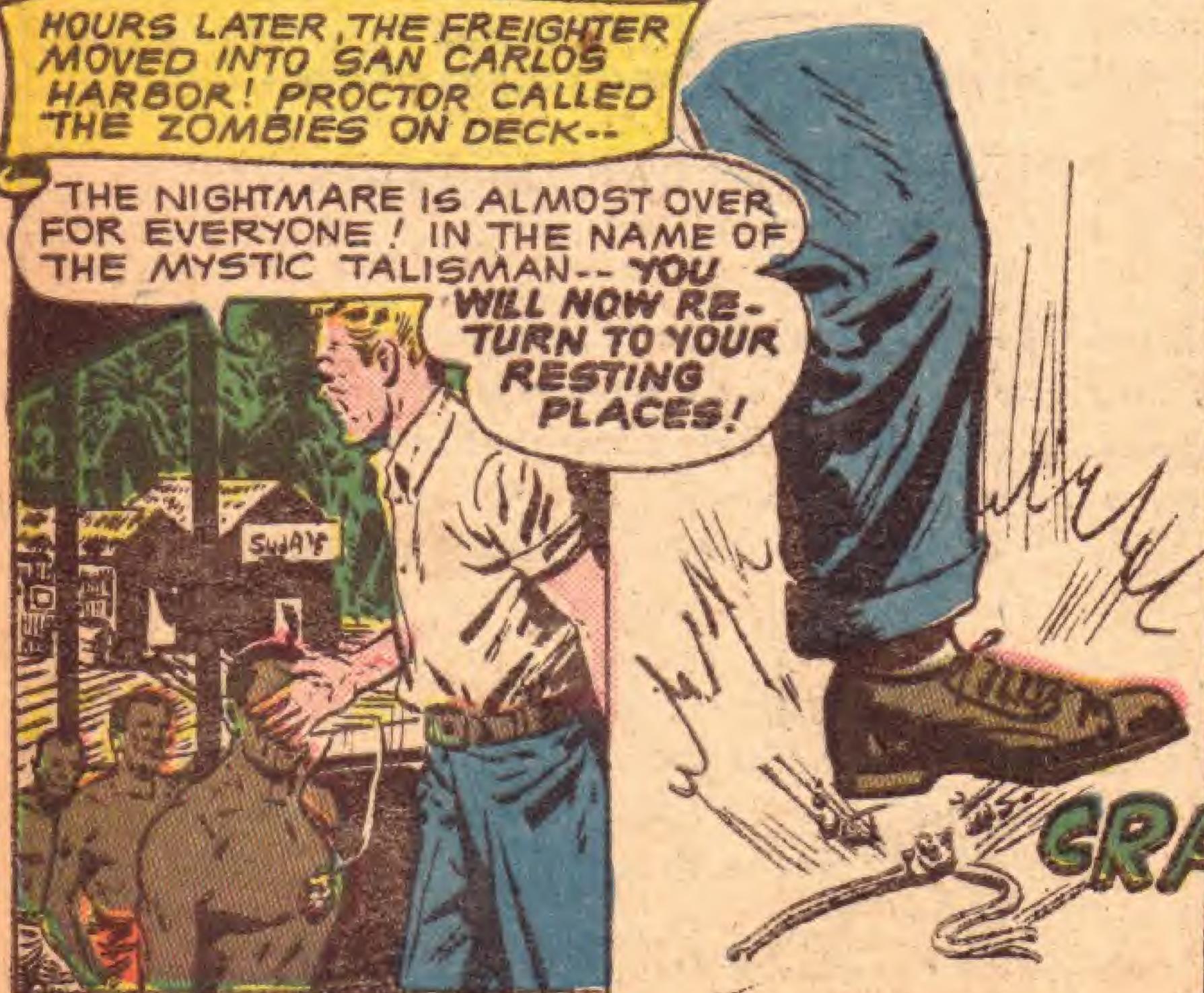
NOW
MASTER
OF
THE
S.S.
NEPTUNE,
GEORGE
ISSUED
CRISP
ORDERS...

HEAD THE SHIP BACK
TO SAN CARLOS!



HOURS LATER, THE FREIGHTER
MOVED INTO SAN CARLOS
HARBOR! PROCTOR CALLED
THE ZOMBIES ON DECK--

THE NIGHTMARE IS ALMOST OVER
FOR EVERYONE! IN THE NAME OF
THE MYSTIC TALISMAN-- YOU
WILL NOW RE-
TURN TO YOUR
RESTING
PLACES!



AND AS THE ZOMBIES FADED
INTO NOTHINGNESS--

ADIOS! ADIOS
FOREVER!



GRAK!

3... 9 END

EDITOR



GREETINGS, ALL YOU loyal fans of "Adventures Into The Unknown"! And we do mean *loyal*...for we doubt whether any publication was ever lucky enough to enjoy such a devoted band of supporters. In all humility, we can state that we owe you much. For it is you who have stood solidly behind us, who have constantly come to our aid with suggestions and helpful criticisms which have worked wonders in making "Adventures Into The Unknown" by far the greatest magazine in its field. Yes, this, the first publication ever to be exclusively devoted to the supernatural within the realm of comics, has come a long way. And our astonishing success has enabled the publication of two great companion magazines..."*Forbidden Worlds*" and "*Out of The Night*"...sellouts throughout the nation!

But "Adventures Into The Unknown" continues its steady and stalwart course, guided by the lodestar of complete reader satisfaction. We'll never let you down, reader...because we'll never take our job for granted. Matter of fact, stories of the supernatural aren't work to us, but part of the joy of life. That's true of all of our

publishing 'family'...editors, writers, researchers...even down to the last proof-reader! We had an excellent example of that at a recent office party. Conversation could have turned to the latest play, book or television program, but didn't. Instead, editors, writers, all of us, were gathered in intent, buzzing groups, doing...what? You've guessed it...telling *ghost stories*!

We're back telling 'em in the current issue...and we think you'll find them the best yet! Take "*Invasion of The Ghost Monsters*", for instance...as eerily fascinating a tale as you'll ever read! "*Skip of Death*" is a new and gripping type of zombie story...and "*Mark of The Monster*" packs a gruesome punch you'll long remember. "*Hands of Darkness*" is weird and gripping...and "*The Witches' Brew*" is the kind of spine-tingling thriller that should produce more than a gasp! Taken together, they add up to a great issue...one which we'd like your opinion on! Address your letter to *The Editor*, "Adventures Into The Unknown", 45 West 45th St., New York 19, N. Y. And here's what a few of your friends are saying!

"Dear Editor:-

I'm an avid reader of 'Adventures Into The Unknown' and sincerely believe that it's the best published in the field of supernatural stories. I've been interested in the wide field of the supernatural for a long time, and have some ideas for stories and weird pictures myself. I've enclosed a drawing...if you'd like to use it in any of your stories, it would please me very much. Again...thanks for your magazine!

--Charles Samuel Davis, Atlanta, Ga."

"Dear Editor:-

Please have more of the printed-type stories such as 'Enchanted Lake' and 'Witches' Curse'. 'Adventures Into The Unknown' is a wonderful and thrilling magazine. It is well worth the price of 10¢! I sincerely hope that in the future, these monthly meetings will be increased to twice a month...or even once a week!

--Pamela S. Brown, Wilmington, N. C."

"Dear Editor:-

I've read many comic books and have enjoyed them all. But I've never read any that are as exciting as 'Adventures Into The Unknown'. It keeps a person in suspense at all times. Here are some of the stories I thought were exceptionally good...'The Curse of The Catacombs', 'Beast From The Beyond', and 'Ghostly Destroyer'.

--N. Lindstrom, Blue Island, Ill."

The MARK of the MONSTER



SOME MEN ARE BORN TO BE HUNG---OTHERS WAIT TENSELY FOR THE FATED MIDNIGHT THAT WILL BRING A DARK AND HOODED FORM FROM THE RUSTLING SHADOWS! ONLY THESE HAUNTED FEW CAN KNOW WHAT THE MARK OF THE MONSTER MEANT TO FRED THATCHER---THE SOFT-PACED HORROR FROM WHICH HE COULD NOT HIDE---THE FLARING DESTINY HE COULD NOT ESCAPE!

ONE NIGHT---ALONG A LANE DAPPLED BY THE CLOUDED MOON---

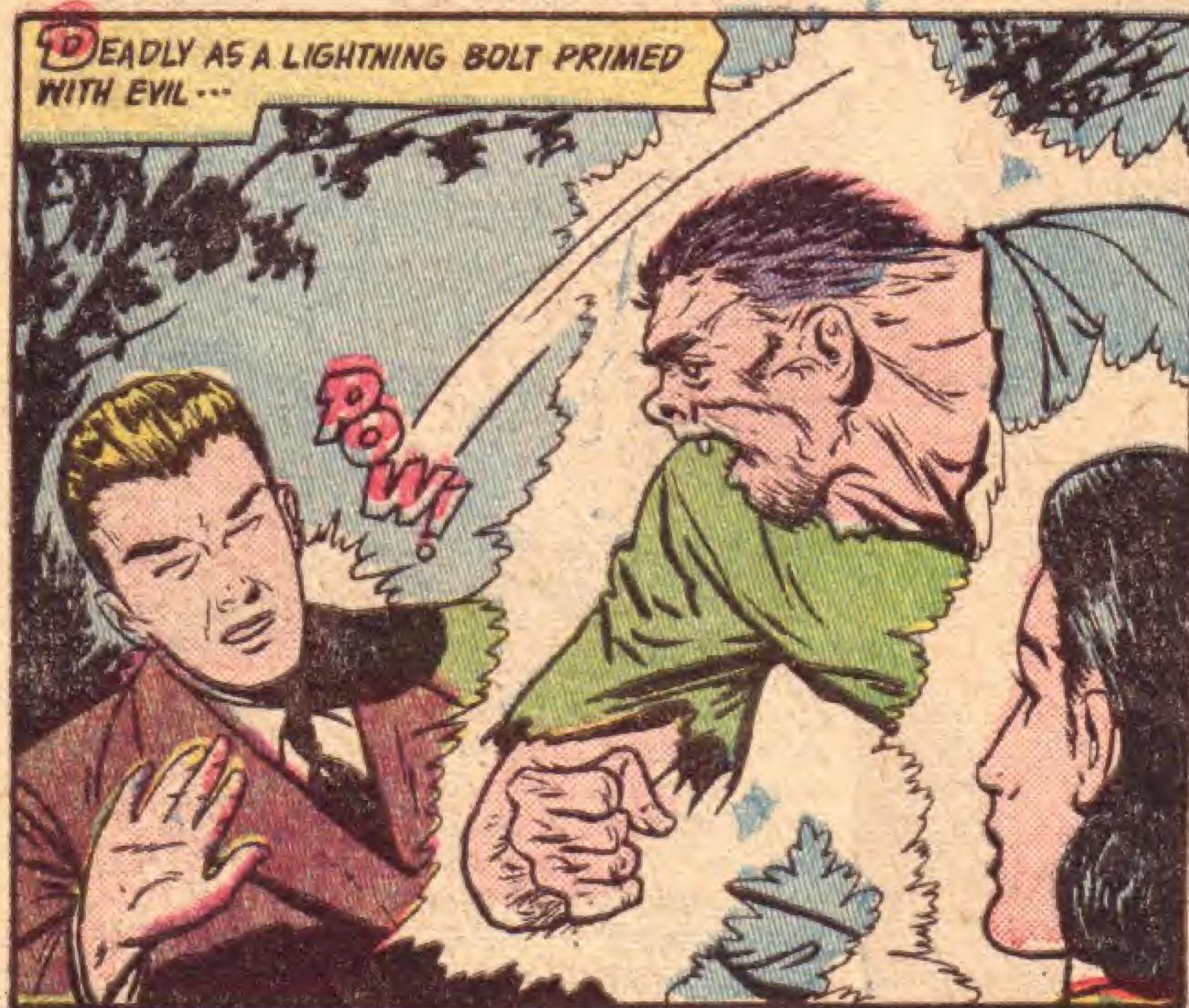
STRANGE THING---FOR MOST OF MY ADULT LIFE, I'VE HAD THE FEELING OF WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN---AND NOW I'VE GOT THE OVERWHELMING CONVICTION THAT IT'LL BE TONIGHT!

THE IDEA OF BEING DESTINED FOR SOMETHING MIGHT SOUND QUEER TO ANYONE ELSE---BUT WHAT ABOUT THE STRANGE CONSTELLATION THAT APPEARED ON THE HORIZON AT THE VERY MOMENT I WAS BORN? THE STARS FORMED SUCH A WEIRD OUTLINE THAT MY FATHER TOOK A PHOTOGRAPH OF THEM---AND I'VE NEVER DOUBTED THAT SOME DAY I'D FIND A LINK BETWEEN THAT SIGN IN THE SKY---AND MY OWN LIFE!

SUDDENLY... GREAT GUNS! THERE WASN'T A SOUL IN SIGHT WHEN I PASSED THIS WAY JUST A MOMENT AGO!

HELP!





WHEN, AFTER DABBING AT FRED'S FACE...

WAIT UP! NO NEED
BEING MYSTERIOUS,
HONEY--WHAT
ABOUT THAT
SECRET?

YOU'LL FIND OUT! AFTER HAVING
WAITED THIS LONG--WILL A
FEW MORE DAYS MATTER?

MOMENTS LATER...

THAT'S STRANGE! SHE SEEMED TO COME FROM NOWHERE
---AND NOW SHE'S VANISHED THE SAME WAY! THE WHOLE
THING'S CRAZY---INCLUDING THE FACT THAT THOSE
MONSTERS REMIND ME OF SOMETHING I'VE
SEEN BEFORE---SOMEWHERE!



SOON AFTERWARD---IN A LAIR WHERE DISTANCE AND
DIRECTION GIVE WAY TO TRACKLESS DARKNESS...

LOOK UPON THIS
BLOOD, MONSTERS
---THE BLOOD OF
THE ONLY MAN IN
THE WORLD
DESTINED TO
WORK OUR
DOOM!



BUT NOW IT IS SOMETHING WE CAN FORE-
STALL---NOW THE MARK OF THE MONSTER
WILL DOOM HIM! GATHER AROUND...
AND LET THE BLACK RITUAL BEGIN!



MIDNIGHT EVIL, MIDNIGHT DARK...
BLOOD BECOME THE MONSTER'S
MARK!

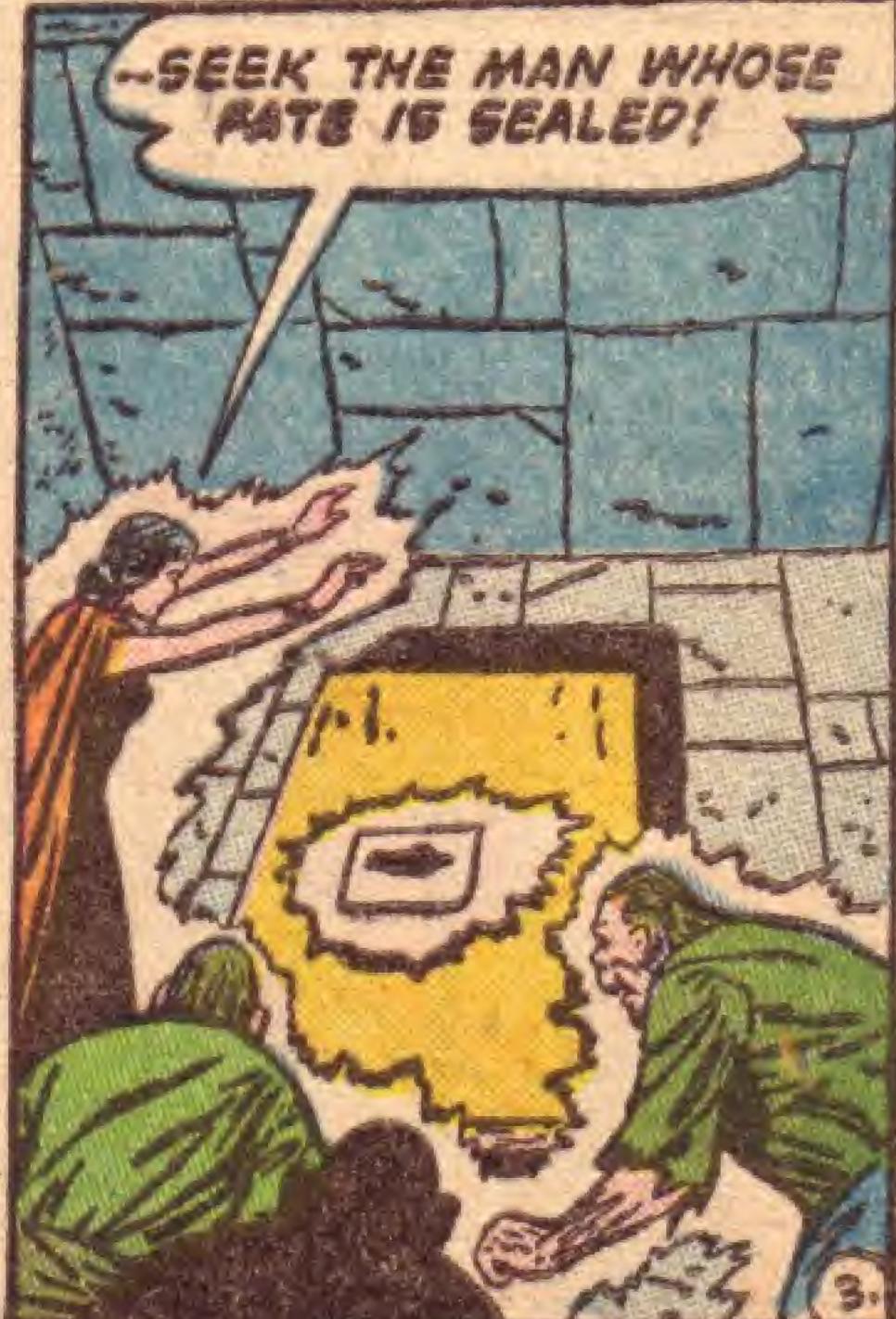


THEN---AS THE CRIMSON STAIN
TAKES ON AN UNMISTAKABLE OUT-
LINE---

MONSTER RISE,
AND EVIL WIELD...



--SEEK THE MAN WHOSE
FATE IS SEALED!



FOR A FLARING SECOND, THE WEIRD IMAGE SHIMMERS WITH A DAZZLING GLOW... THEN...



HA HA! A NEW MONSTER... AND A NEW VICTIM! SEEK HIM OUT... SMITE HIM WITH OUR CURSE!

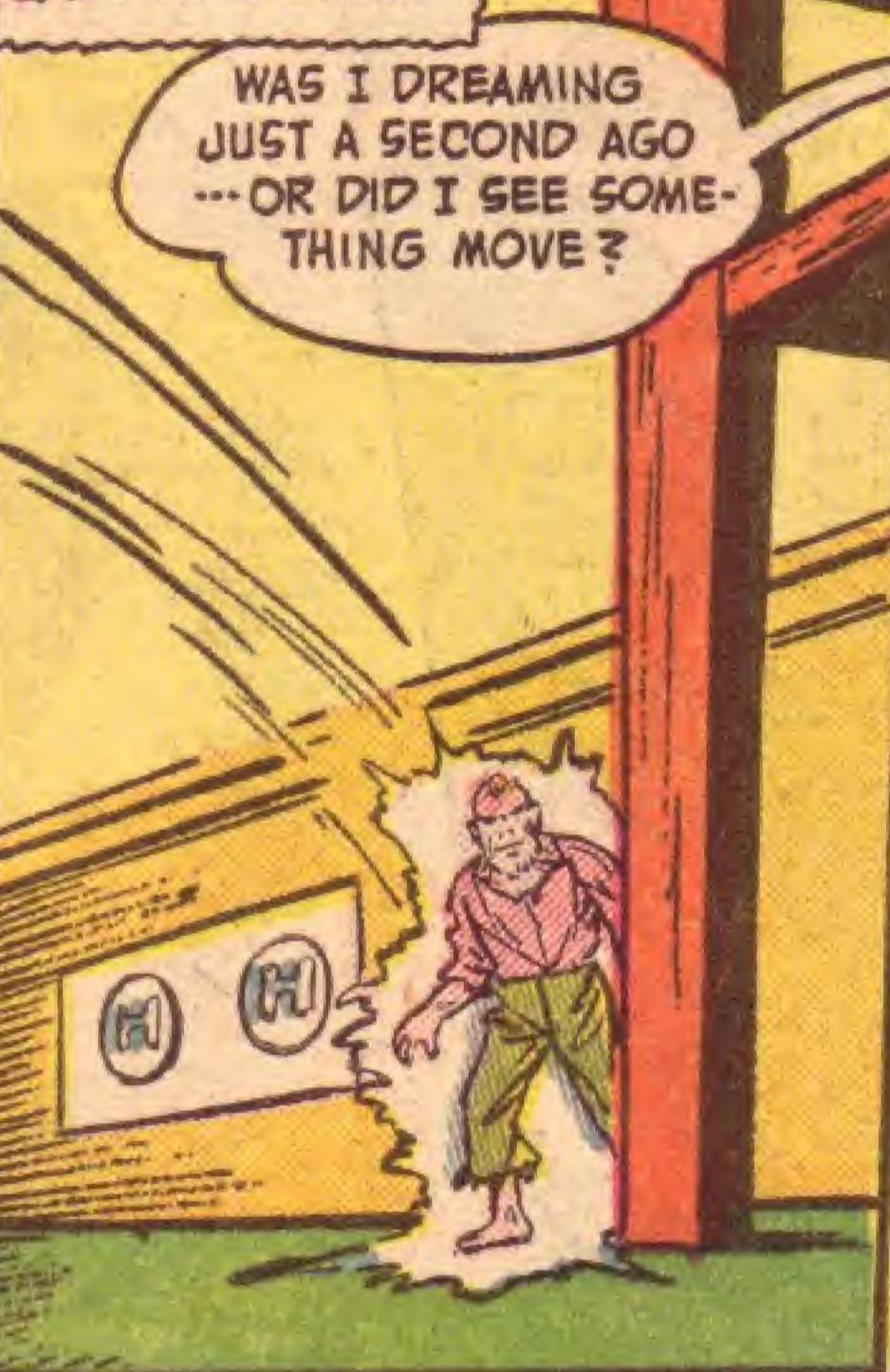
FOR YEARS, I SEARCHED FOR FRED THATCHER... AND FOR YEARS, WITHOUT HIS BEING AWARE OF IT... THE EVENTS IN HIS LIFE HAVE BEEN BRINGING HIM CLOSER TO ME! BUT HE'LL NEVER REALIZE THE POWER HE ALONE POSSESSES... BECAUSE NOW THAT I'VE FOUND HIM... HE'S LOST BOTH HIS POWER AND HIS SOUL!



AN HOUR LATER... LIKE A BLOT OF HORROR CREEPING ACROSS THE MOONLIT ROOM...



AS FRED STIRS...

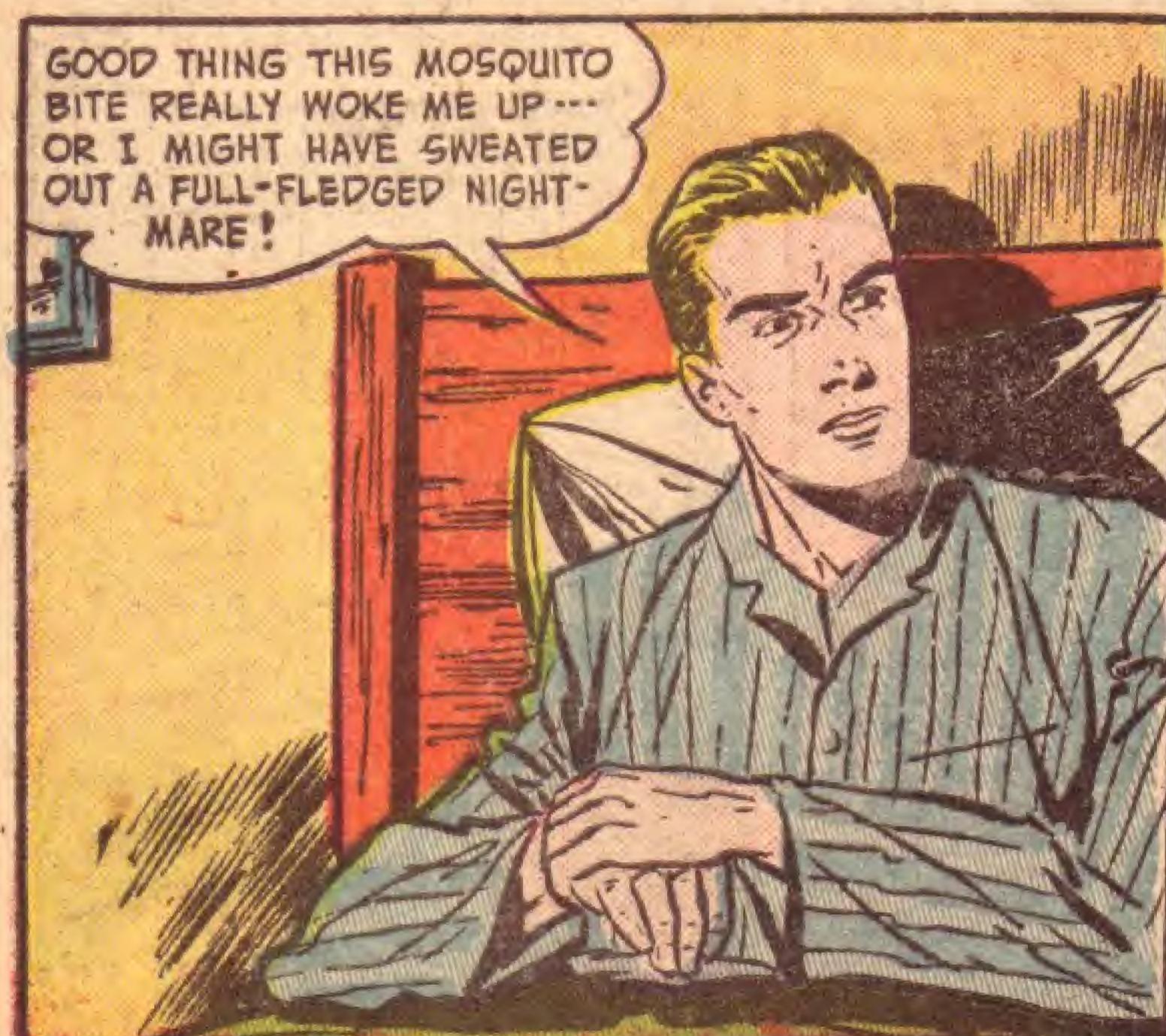


WAS I DREAMING JUST A SECOND AGO... OR DID I SEE SOMETHING MOVE?

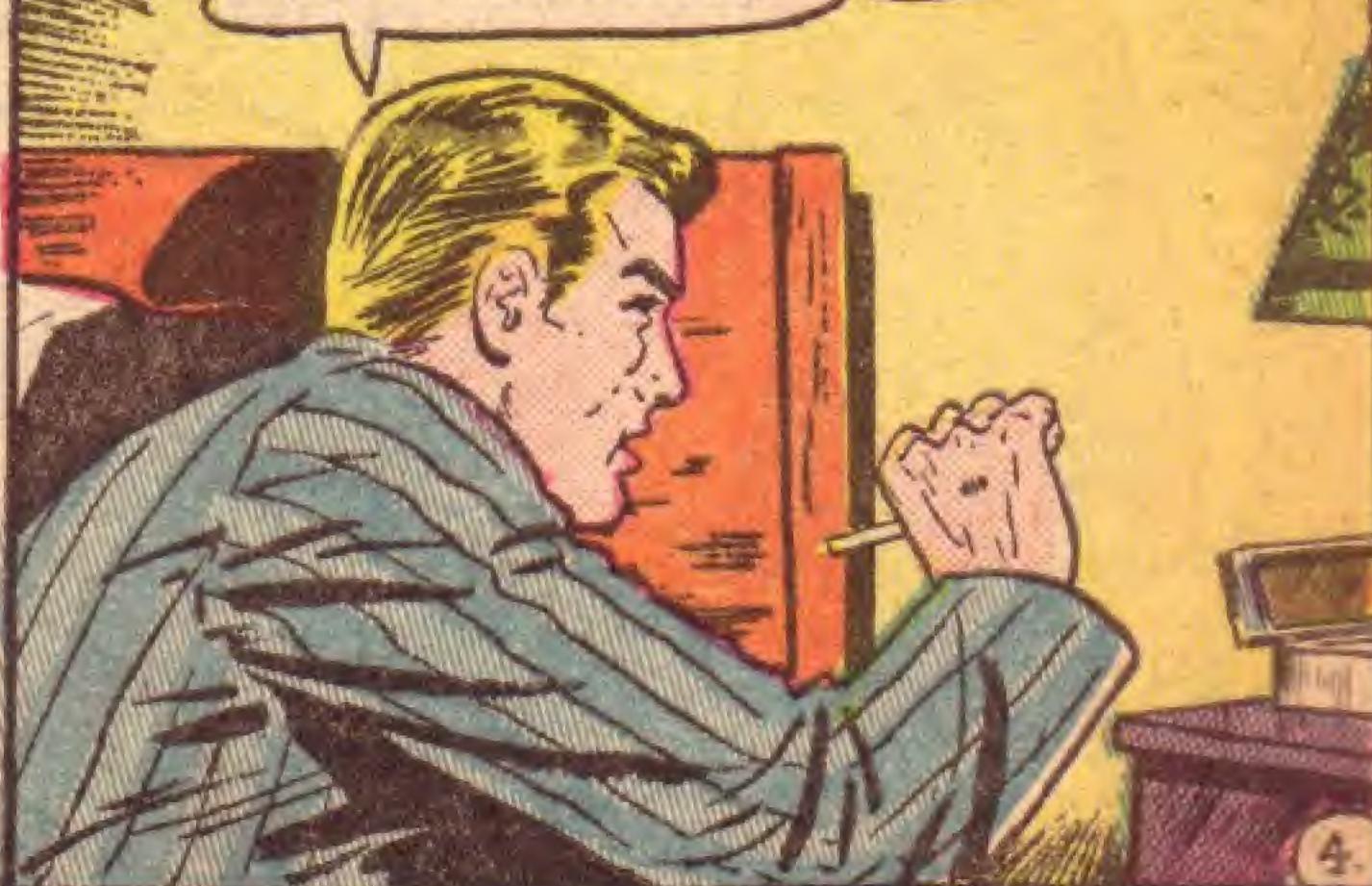
Then... SWIFT AS A GLOWING DART...



GOOD THING THIS MOSQUITO BITE REALLY WOKE ME UP... OR I MIGHT HAVE SWEATED OUT A FULL-FLEDGED NIGHTMARE!



BUT WAS IT A MOSQUITO? THERE'S NO BUMP HERE... JUST A TINY RED MARK... AND IT ALMOST SEEMS TO HAVE A RECOGNIZABLE SHAPE! I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY I'D ASSOCIATE IT WITH VENOMA, EITHER-- EXCEPT THAT IT ISN'T EASY TO GET A CHICK LIKE HER OFF YOUR MIND!



GATE THE FOLLOWING NIGHT---

STRANGE! THOSE FANCY CHIMES THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO RING WHENEVER ANYONE STEPS ON THE DOORMAT MUST HAVE GONE OUT OF WHACK!

FRED
...LET
ME
IN!

NOK!
NOK!

FOR AN INSTANT, FRED STARES IN SURPRISE --- AND IN THAT SAME INSTANT, WITH A LINGERING GLANCE ---

VENOMA!

DIDN'T I
SAY WE'D
MEET
AGAIN?

I WOULDN'T PARTICULARLY MIND IF I'D BEEN ABLE TO DREAM ABOUT YOU LAST NIGHT --- BUT I HAD TO SETTLE FOR ONE OF THOSE MONSTERS! THAT'S WHERE YOUR SECRET COMES IN, HONEY ---
WHAT'S THE TIEUP?

BEFORE WE GO INTO THAT ...
ISN'T YOUR LIFE A SECRET TO ME? WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF?

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT --- MAYBE YOU WON'T THINK I'M NUTS FOR BELIEVING I'VE BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR SOME MYSTERIOUS MISSION! I WON'T ASK YOU TO TAKE MY WORD FOR THE FACT THAT A STRANGE CLUSTER OF STARS APPEARED THE NIGHT I WAS BORN, VENOMA --- BECAUSE I'VE GOT AN ACTUAL PHOTOGRAPH OF THE CONSTELLATION!

DON'T BOTHER,
FRED ... OF COURSE
I BELIEVE YOU!

IT WON'T BE ANY TROUBLE TO FIND THE PICTURE! BESIDES, AFTER NOT HAVING SEEN IT FOR YEARS ... I'VE BEEN MEANING TO EXAMINE IT TO CHECK THE DETAILS!

SUDDENLY ...

YE GODS!
VENOMA
...LOOK
OUT!

CRASH!

WITH THEIR FIENDISH STRENGTH LOOSED IN A BATTERING RUSH ...

Pow! Sok!

AFTER A SWIRLING MOMENT OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS...

GOOD LORD! THOSE CREEPS ARE GONE... AND THEY'VE TAKEN VENOMA WITH THEM!



AS IF THE DOOR CHIMES HAD SOUNDED A WARNING... FRED MAKES A HURRIED SEARCH!

THE PHOTOGRAPH'S GONE... THE VERY ONE I WANTED VENOMA TO SEE... THE PICTURE I KNEW BORE SOME RELATION TO THOSE MONSTERS! IS THAT WHAT THEY CAME FOR?



WHAT ELSE DOES IT REPRESENT? WHAT IS IT I CAN BARELY MAKE OUT... AND DON'T DARE ADMIT TO MYSELF? I'M NOT THE TYPE THAT SCARES EASILY, BUT NOW I'M UP AGAINST SOMETHING THAT HAS ME LICKED...

THE TERROR OF DOUBT!



FOR SEVERAL PACING HOURS... A TORRENT OF QUESTIONS CHURN THROUGH FRED'S MIND!

WHY DID THOSE MONSTERS APPEAR BOTH TIMES I SAW VENOMA... AND WHY DID SHE GLANCE AT MY HAND TONIGHT... EXPECTANTLY? IF HER BODY'S AS REAL AS IT LOOKS... WHY DIDN'T HER WEIGHT ON THE DOORMAT RING THOSE CHIMES? THE WHOLE KEY IS THAT PHOTOGRAPH OF THE STARS... I REMEMBER MY FATHER GAVE A COPY OF IT TO SOMEONE... BUT WHO?



NOPE... THEY'RE NOWHERE...

TING TONG TONG!



AS FRED RAISES HIS HAND IN A PUZZLED GESTURE...

THAT MARK! IT'S GROWN SINCE LAST NIGHT... IT'S A SHAPE I CAN'T MISTAKE... A MONSTER!



TOWARD DAWN... IN THE SWAYING TORMENT OF RESTLESS SLEEP...

VENOMA... VENOMA! EXPLAIN YOUR SECRET... UNLESS IT WAS MORE A TAUNT THAN A PROMISE!



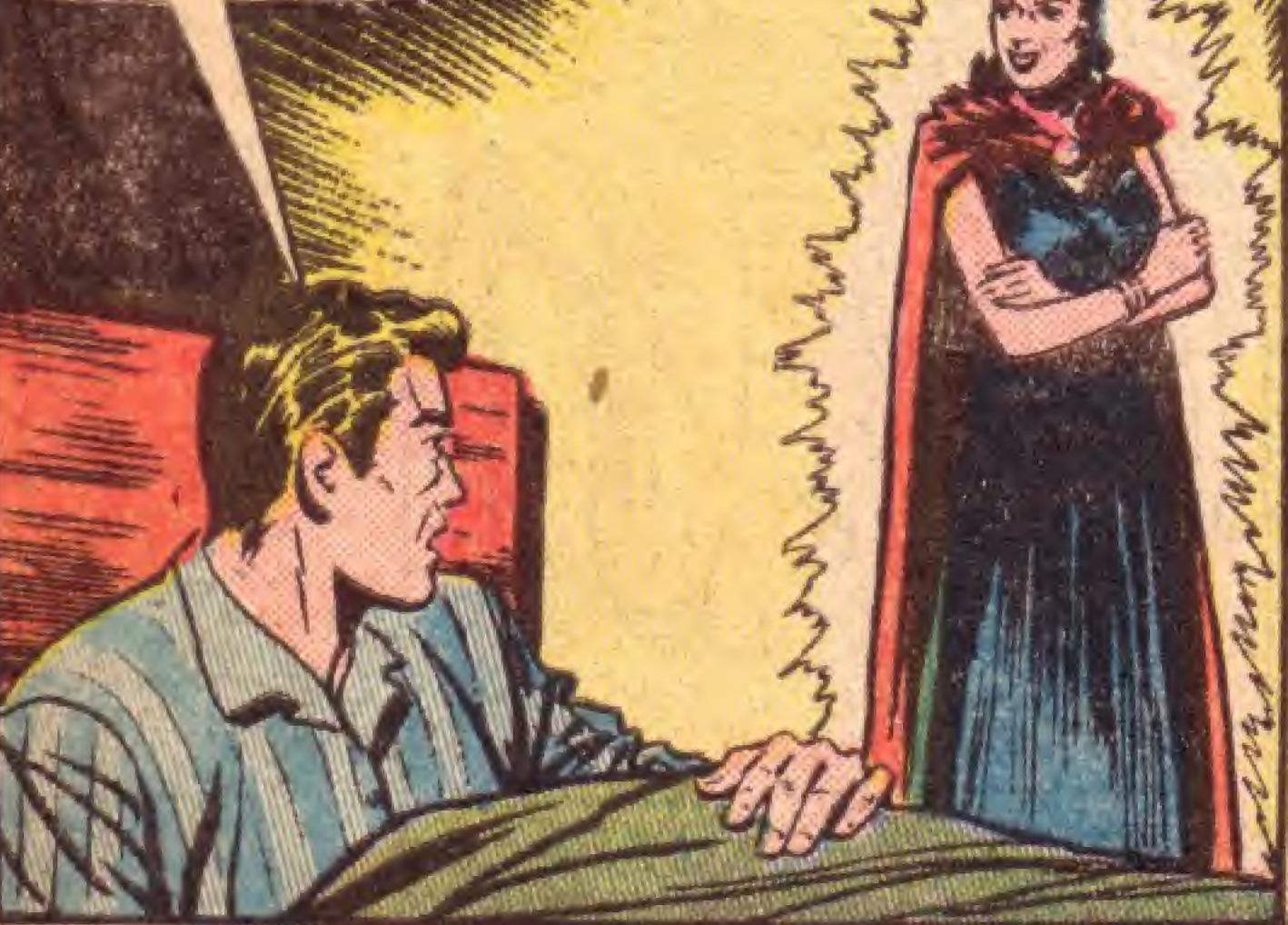
Then...as if a gap in the wall of darkness took on form...

GOOD LORD! A SECOND AGO YOU WERE A VISION... SOMETHING I DREAMED... AND NOW YOU'RE HERE!

HA HA HA!

YOU WOULD HAVE LEARNED THE SECRET HAD YOUR DESTINY BEEN FULFILLED... IF YOU HAD FOUND YOUR WAY TO OUR LAIR WITHOUT THE MARK OF THE MONSTER! THEN YOU COULD HAVE DESTROYED US... INSTEAD OF WAITING LIKE THIS... WHILE YOUR OWN DOOM CREEPS CLOSER!

I CAN STAND ANYTHING BUT UNCERTAINTY, VENOMA! GIVE ME A HINT OF WHAT'S AHEAD... SHOW ME WHAT THE MARK OF THE MONSTER MEANS!



IN A FLASH BRISTLING WITH HORROR...

THIS!

CREAK!

NO... NO!
THAT CAN'T
BE YOU!

AND WHO ELSE?
CAN YOU GUESS?



AS THE TERRIFYING SHAPE FADES...

WHETHER IT HAPPENED OR NOT, MY NERVES ARE SHOT... TOMORROW I'D BETTER SEE OLD DR. BAILEY! GREAT GUNS... IT WAS DR. BAILEY WHO BROUGHT ME INTO THE WORLD... AND HE'S THE ONE TO WHOM MY FATHER GAVE THE EXTRA PHOTOGRAPH!

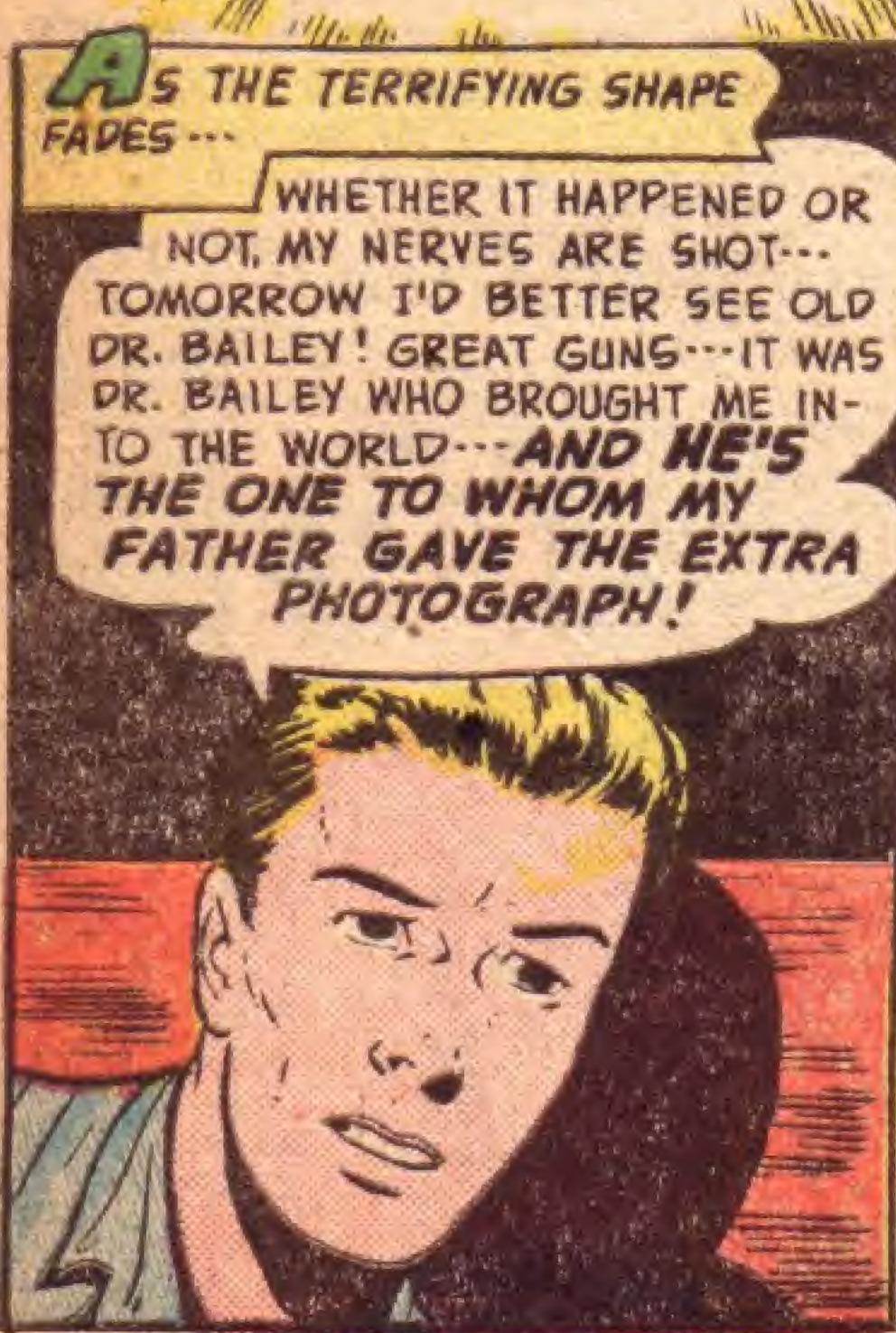
NEXT DAY...

NOW I KNOW WHY THOSE MONSTERS SEEMED FAMILIAR THE FIRST TIME I SAW THEM... AND WHY VENOMA SUMMONED THEM LAST NIGHT! SHE REALIZED I'D LEARN TOO MUCH WHEN I SAW HOW THESE STARS WERE GROUPED... THE STARS THAT FORMED A FIGURE IN THE SKY THE NIGHT I WAS BORN... THE OUTLINE OF ONE OF THOSE CREEPS!

COME HERE, FRED! I'D LIKE TO TAKE A LOOK AT THAT HAND OF YOURS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE!

FRED HAD SENSED SOMETHING ABOUT THE MARK OF THE MONSTER... AND NOW... MAGNIFIED A HUNDRED TIMES...

I HOPE IT WAS SOME KIND OF STRANGE SKIN BLEMISH, FRED... BUT YOU MIGHT AS WELL BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE TRUTH! THE MARK IS DEVELOPING A FACE... THE FEATURES ARE STILL HAZY... BUT THEY'RE YOURS!



MY FACE! VS GODS,
DOCTOR--WHAT DOES
IT MEAN --WHAT ARE
THOSE FIENDS TRY-
ING TO DO?

I'VE READ ENOUGH ABOUT
BLACK MAGIC TO MAKE A
GUESS, FRED! BY TOMORROW
NIGHT, THE FACE ON YOUR
HAND WILL BE RECOGNIZ-
ABLE TO YOU ...AND THEN
YOU'LL BE DRAWN TO
VENOMA'S HIDDEN RETREAT
... TO BECOME A
MONSTER
YOURSELF!

I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED
--WHEN VENOMA TAUNTED
ME LAST NIGHT! YES, I
COULD HAVE DESTROYED
THEM --UNTIL THAT BLACK-
HEARTED WITCH FOUND
A WAY TO ENSLAVE
ME FOREVER!

FRED...I'M GOING TO
SUGGEST A DRASTIC
STEP! IT WILL TAKE
COURAGE --IT WILL
GIVE YOU A REMINDER
OF THIS TERROR FOR
THE REST OF YOUR
LIFE...BUT IT
MAY SAVE YOUR
SOUL!



THE FOLLOWING NIGHT...AS A GAUNT
FIGURE APPROACHES THE LAIR OF EVIL...

LOOK, FIENDS--THE BIDDING
OF MY WILL HAS BROUGHT HIM
HERE! AND HE WILL NEVER LEAVE
---HE WILL NEVER AGAIN BE
HUMAN...ONCE HE LOOKS
AT HIS HAND!



YOUR DOOM IS CLOSE, FRED
THATCHER! THE MARK OF
THE MONSTER IS ON YOUR
HAND---YOUR FEATURES
ARE ON THE MARK...AS
PROOF OF WHAT
YOU SHALL NOW
BECOME!

NO
MARK,
VENOMA
---NO
FEATURES
---NO
HAND!



WHAT ABOUT IT...NOW THAT I'VE REACH-
ED THE HAVEN OF EVIL **WITHOUT**
YOUR CURSED BLEMISH? I DON'T
KNOW WHERE MY POWER'S COMING
FROM--BUT I CAN FEEL IT SURGING
THROUGH ME--**BECAUSE THIS**
IS THE MOMENT FOR WHICH
I WAS BORN!



WHEN, IN A FLASH THAT SHUDDERS AGAINST THE NIGHT, A
TOWERING FIGURE LOOMS ABOVE THE SWAYING WALLS...THE
FIGURE OF A MAN WHO FOR A SINGLE INSTANT TAKES ON THE
VASTNESS OF DESTINY ITSELF...AND STRIKES!



THEY'RE GONE---BURIED UNDER THE STONES THAT KNEW
THEIR CRAWLING HORROR---ENGULFED BY THE DARK
PAST THAT SPAWNED THEM! I'VE LOST A HAND--BUT
I'VE GAINED RELEASE FROM A BLIND DATE WITH
DOOM--AND I CAN THANK MY LUCKY
STARS!



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REUNION

THE DOCTOR LEFT and the nurse sat down. Jeff closed his eyes. He felt the nurse's fingers on his wrist as she took his pulse again. Everybody seemed astonished that he had lived this long. But he wasn't going to die until Judy came. And she was coming. They had shown him her telegram in reply to his! *TAKING PLANE. ARRIVE EIGHT TONIGHT. LOVE, JUDY.*

Yet that *LOVE, JUDY!* She hadn't had to put that in. Perhaps she, too, felt the way he did...that their divorce had been a big mistake. Not that it mattered now. And yet, it did. With Judy beside him, he wouldn't mind anything...even dying.

Jeff opened his eyes. "What's the time, nurse?"

"Five o'clock...Please don't talk."

Judy's plane was scheduled to land at eight. Three more hours to wait. Three more hours to push back the black shadows.

They had drugged him and he lay relaxed, sleeping a little, then awakening. Six o'clock passed. Then seven. He managed to keep his eyes on the clock on the night table. He watched the big hand dip down past seven-

thirty and commence to climb up the dial. At eight o'clock, his gaze went to the door and stayed there. It would be only a short time now, perhaps fifteen minutes, before Judy would arrive.

At that moment he was amazed to see Judy come rushing through the doorway. She was early! She came toward him, arms outstretched.

"Judy!" Jeff said.

Then she was in his arms and her lips were on his. "Jeff, darling," she said. "We're together again...forever!"

Outside in the hall, the tall nurse spoke to the doctor. "It was too bad he couldn't get his wish," she said. "It was too bad he died before she arriving on that eight o'clock plane from Kansas City."

The doctor's face was grave. "Perhaps it's just as well he died when he did," he said. "For she couldn't have come. I just got a report that the Kansas City plane crashed on landing. Everybody aboard was killed. It happened at exactly *eight o'clock!*"

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933 AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233)

Of ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN, published monthly at Buffalo, N. Y., for October 1st, 1951.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Best Syndicated Features, Inc., Sparta, Ill.; Editor, Richard E. Hughes, 120 West 183 St., New York, N. Y.; Managing editor, None.; Business manager, Frederick H. Iger, 50 Beverly Road, Great Neck, L. I., N. Y.

2. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member, must be given. Best Syndicated Features, Inc., Sparta, Ill.; B. W. Bangor, 7 West 81 Street, New York, N. Y.; Frederick H. Iger, 50 Beverly Road, Great Neck, L. I., N. Y.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

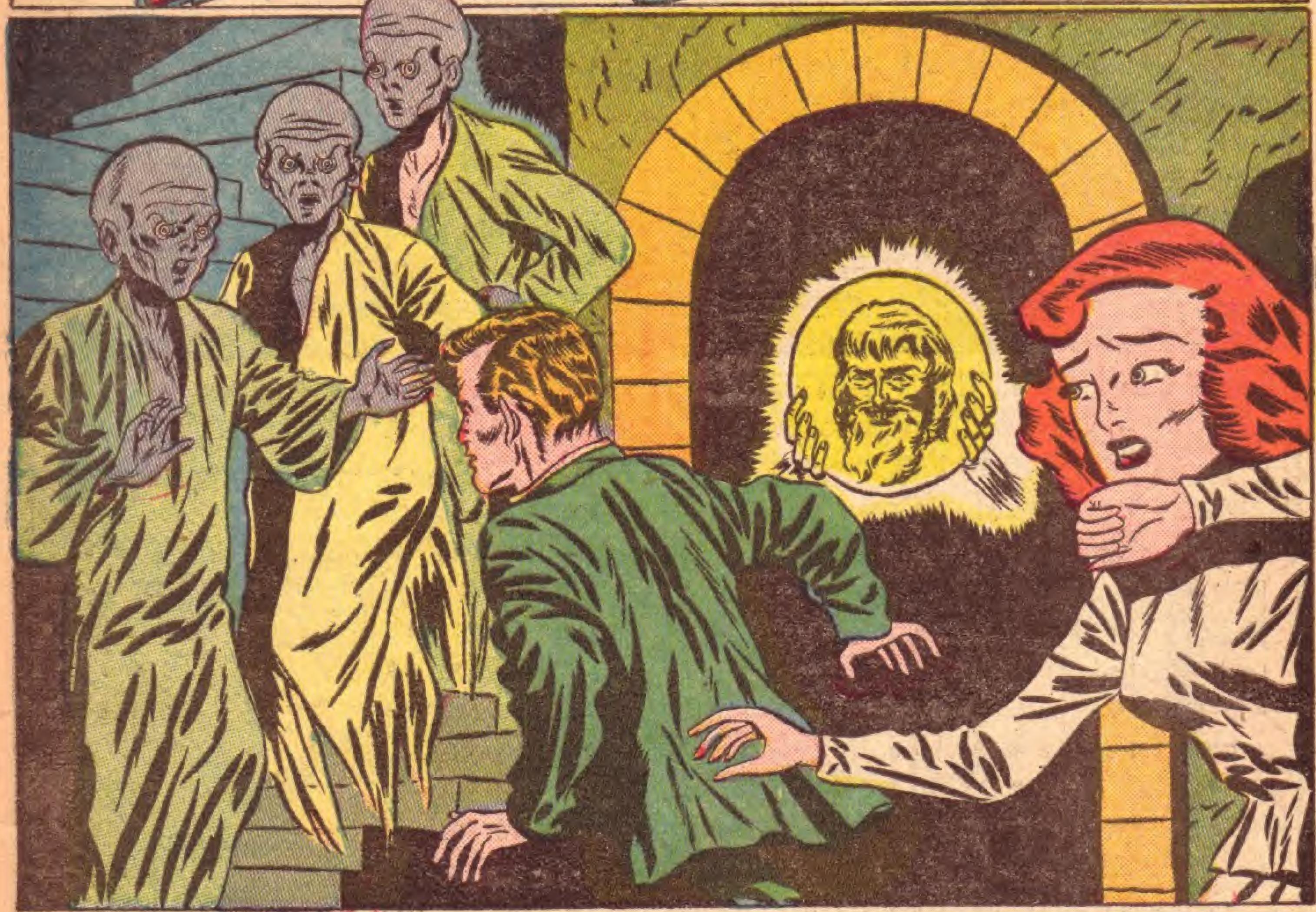
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(Signed) RICHARD E. HUGHES, Editor
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of September, 1951.

Nat C. Sherman, Notary Public, State of New York. (My commission expires March 30, 1953)

THE FACE WAS BAD ENOUGH-- STARING LIKE THE EMBODIMENT OF EVIL FROM THE GLASS SPHERE THAT HAD KEPT IT IMPRISONED FOR CENTURIES! THE FIENDS WHO AWAITED ITS SUMMONS WERE EVEN WORSE-- THEIR GRAVE-BOUND BODIES BLIGHTING THE GROUND WITH A TERRIFYING GLOW! BUT NEITHER OF THESE COULD MATCH THE RAW HORROR OF THE THINGS THAT GROPED IN THE SHADOWS-- THINGS WITH CLUTCHING FINGERS HOLDING A WARNING OF DOOM--

The HANDS of DARKNESS



AS A POWERFUL NEW JET PLANE NEARS THE END OF A TRIAL RUN ACROSS THE ATLANTIC--

I USED TO WORRY ABOUT YOUR BEING A TEST PILOT, CLIFF-- BUT NOW THAT I'M MAKING MY FIRST HOP-- I THINK IT'S FUN!

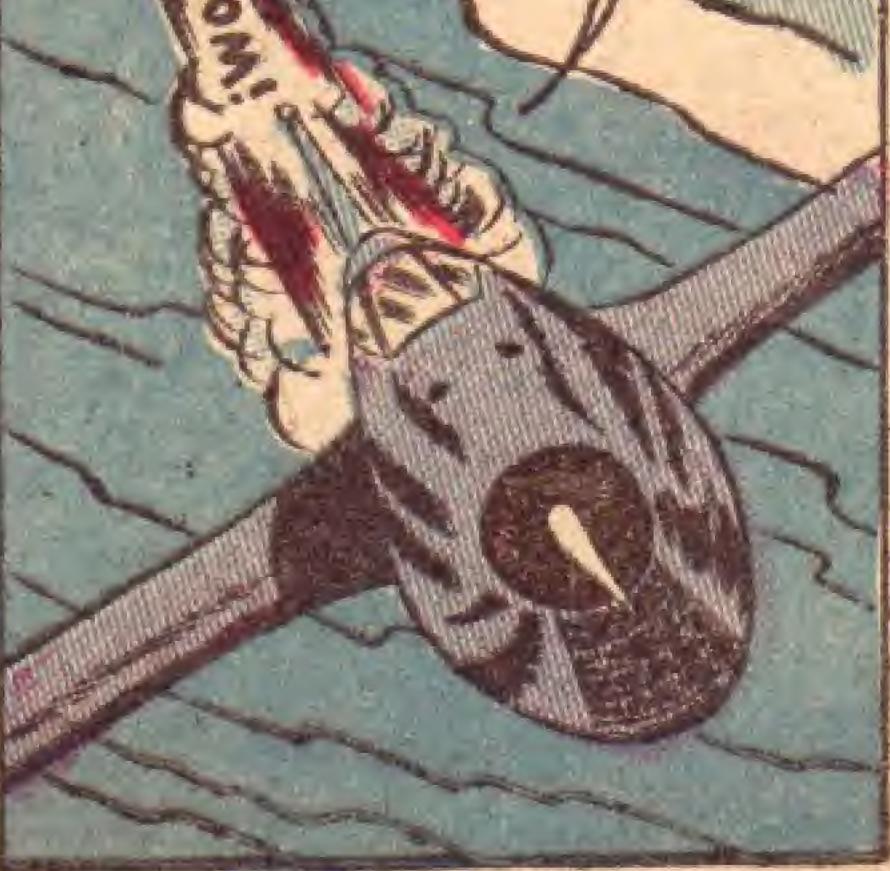
SOME JOB, HUH? JUST FIVE HOURS OUT OF NEW YORK-- AND WE'RE WITHIN SIGHT OF THE ENGLISH COAST!

SUDDENLY--

GOOD HEAVENS, CLIFF-- WHAT'S WRONG?

FUEL'S FLOODING THE COMBUSTION CHAMBER-- PRODUCING A FLAME HOT ENOUGH TO MELT THE JET OUTLET! I'LL HAVE TO CUT THE POWER, GAIL AND BRING HER DOWN ON THE BEACH!

SECONDS LATER-- ON THE FORBIDDING CORNWALL COAST--



IT'S BAD ENOUGH TO BE STRANDED IN A GRIM PLACE LIKE THIS-- BUT I HOPE WE WON'T HAVE TO TAKE SHELTER IN THAT CAVE!

BABY, WE'RE GOING TO CAMP OUT IN STYLE ! SEE THAT OLD CASTLE UP THERE ?

AS DUSK SETTLES OVER THE DARK AND MOSSY TOWERS--
GLOOMY OLD HEAP-- BUT IT CERTAINLY WITHSTOOD THE RAVAGES OF TIME, GAIL !

THAT'S JUST WHAT I'M WONDERING ABOUT ! OLD CASTLES IN GOOD CONDITION ARE HARD TO FIND-- WHY ISN'T SOMEONE LIVING IN IT ?



LOCKED, EH ? GUESS WE DON'T GET IN, CLIFF-- AND IT'S A WEIGHT OFF MY MIND !

HATE TO SAY THIS-- BUT TO ME, AN OPEN TRANSOM'S THE NEXT BEST THING TO A DOOR !

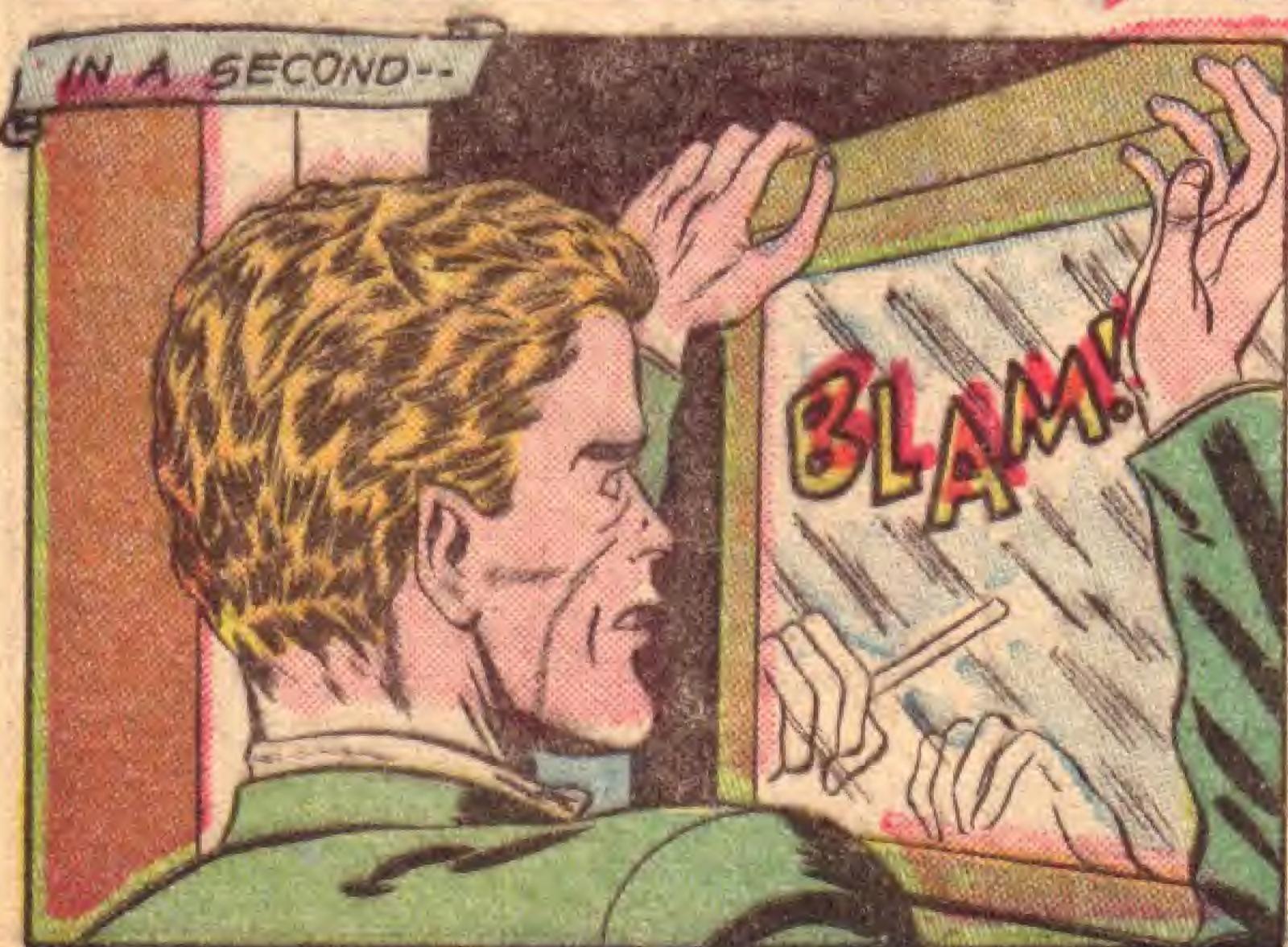
CLIFF-- I WISH YOU WOULDN'T ! I'VE GOT A FEELING SOMETHING'S TRYING TO KEEP US OUT !

HOLY COW ! WHY DO PEOPLE THINK OF GHOSTS THE MINUTE THEY SEE AN OLD CASTLE ?

A STRANGE GLOW GLIDES FROM THE DEPTHS OF DARKNESS -- AND AS IT COMES CLOSER --



I KNEW THIS PLACE FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, WAS BEST LEFT ALONE ! PLEASE, CLIFF-- LET'S GET BACK TO THE PLANE ! THERE'S NEVER A SPECIAL MANIFESTATION WITHOUT A REASON -- AND I'M GOING TO LEARN WHAT'S BEHIND THIS ONE !





INSIDE THE MUSTY CHAMBER--
OVERHUNG WITH AN ATMOSPHERE OF DREAD--

MINUTES LATER -- ON THE WINDSWEPT PARAPET --

A MOMENT LATER--

GET ME OUT, CLIFF-- I CAN'T STAND BEING HERE ALONE!
HONEY--TRY TO KEEP CALM! THOSE HANDS HAVE DISAPPEARED WITH THE KEY!
--BUT I'M SURE I CAN FIND ANOTHER WAY!

THIS TAPESTRY ROPE IS PRETTY ANCIENT-- BUT I GUESS IT'LL BE STRONG ENOUGH! GAIL MIGHT BE FACING ANYTHING-- AND I CAN'T STOP TO THINK OF RISKS!

GAIL, I'M RIGHT OUTSIDE-- PUSH THE WINDOW OPEN!

I CAN'T, CLIFF-- IT'S WARPED SHUT!

BABY--THAT'S NOT STOPPING ME!

CLIFF-- WE'RE A HUNDRED FEET UP! HOW CAN I CLIMB THE ROPE WITH A DROP LIKE THAT YAWNING BELOW US?

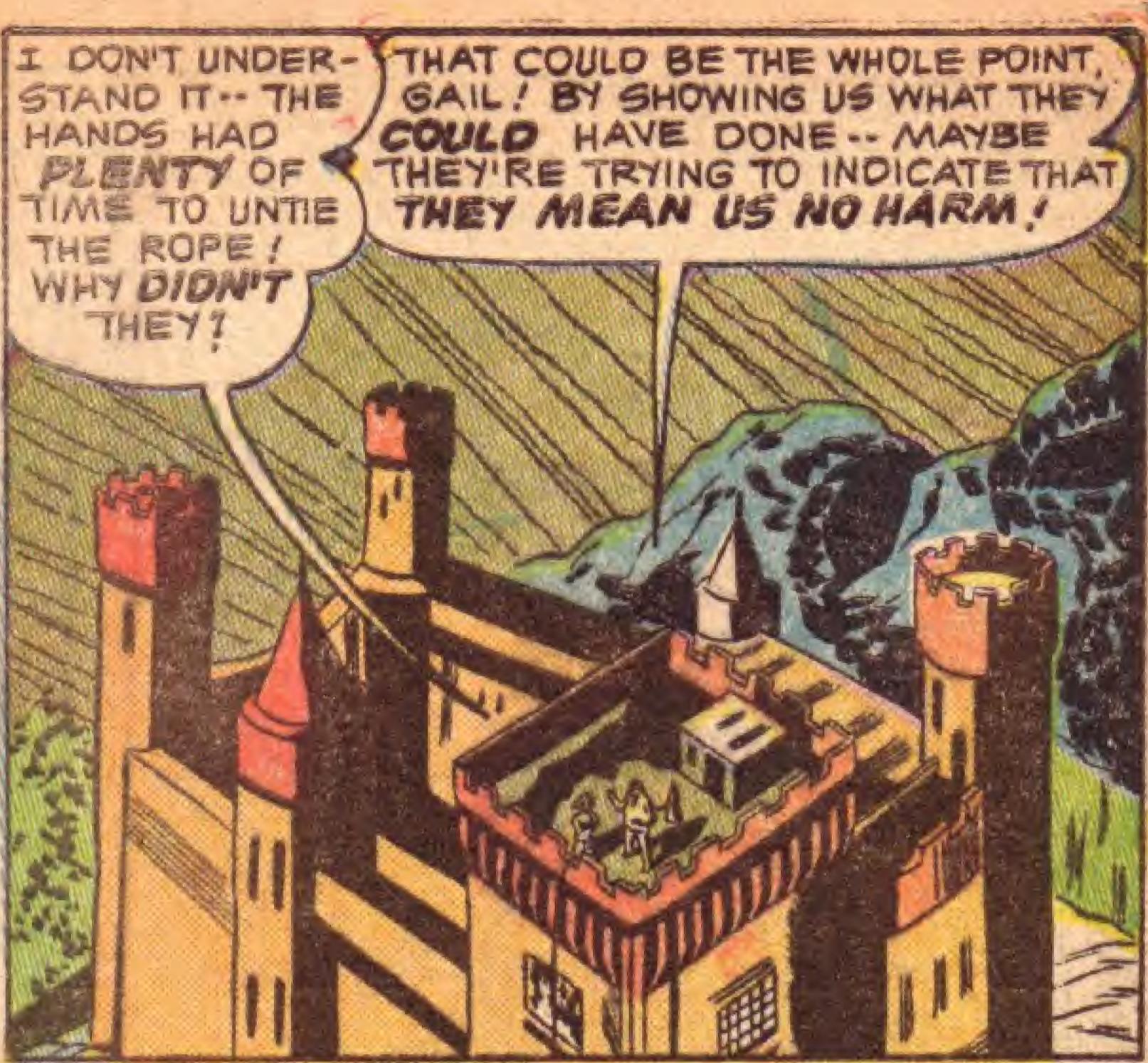
COME ON, GAIL-- IT'LL BE A LOT EASIER THAN STAYING HERE!

HOW ABOUT IT, HONEY-- DIDN'T I SAY IT'D BE EASY?

CLIFF-- THE HANDS! LOOK AT THEM-- RIGHT BESIDE THE ROPE!

THEY'RE GOING TO UNTIE THE KNOT, CLIFF! I'M FEELING FAINT-- I CAN'T HOLD ON!

TAKE IT EASY, GAIL-- IT'S JUST A FEW MORE YARDS! IF WE'RE FAST ENOUGH-- WE CAN MAKE IT!



THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY THE HANDS SLAMMED THE TRANSOM IN MY FACE-- AND WHY THEY LOCKED YOU IN THAT CHAMBER IN AN ATTEMPT TO SCARE US INTO LEAVING! THOSE HANDS KNOW THE EVIL THAT LURKS IN THIS CASTLE-- AND THEY'RE AFRAID WE'LL STUMBLE ONTO IT!

SUDDENLY-- IT MIGHT BE THE GLOW OF FIREFLIES-- BUT SUPPOSE WE GO DOWN AND HAVE A LOOK!

CLIFF-- LOOK AT THOSE STRANGE PATCHES OF LIGHT BELOW!

A close-up of a man's face, looking serious. He has short brown hair and is wearing a green jacket.

THEN-- WITH THE SILENT CASTLE REARING BEHIND THEM--

THERE'S A FEELING OF DREAD ABOUT THIS PLACE, TOO! THE GLOW IS COMING FROM BARE PATCHES IN THE GROUND-- WITHOUT EVEN A SINGLE BLADE OF GRASS!

HONEY-- THOSE BARE PATCHES AREN'T MERE ACCIDENT-- THEY MEAN SOMETHING!

A man and a woman are standing in a field. The man is wearing a green suit and the woman is wearing a white dress. They are looking towards the castle in the distance.

THEY'VE ALL GOT THE SAME OUTLINE, GAIL-- A DEFINITE SHAPE! GOSH KNOWS WHAT THEY ARE-- BUT THEY CERTAINLY DON'T LOOK HUMAN!

Two figures are standing in a field. One figure is wearing a green suit and the other is wearing a pink dress. They are looking towards the horizon.

CLIFF, THOSE FIGURES MUST MARK SOMETHING-- AND I THINK THEY'RE GRAVES!

YE GODS-- LOOK! THERE'S A WEIRD GLOBULE OF LIGHT RISING FROM EACH ONE OF THOSE OUTLINES!

The man and woman are walking through a field. There are several bright yellow spots on the ground, each with a small globe of light rising from it. They are looking at these spots.

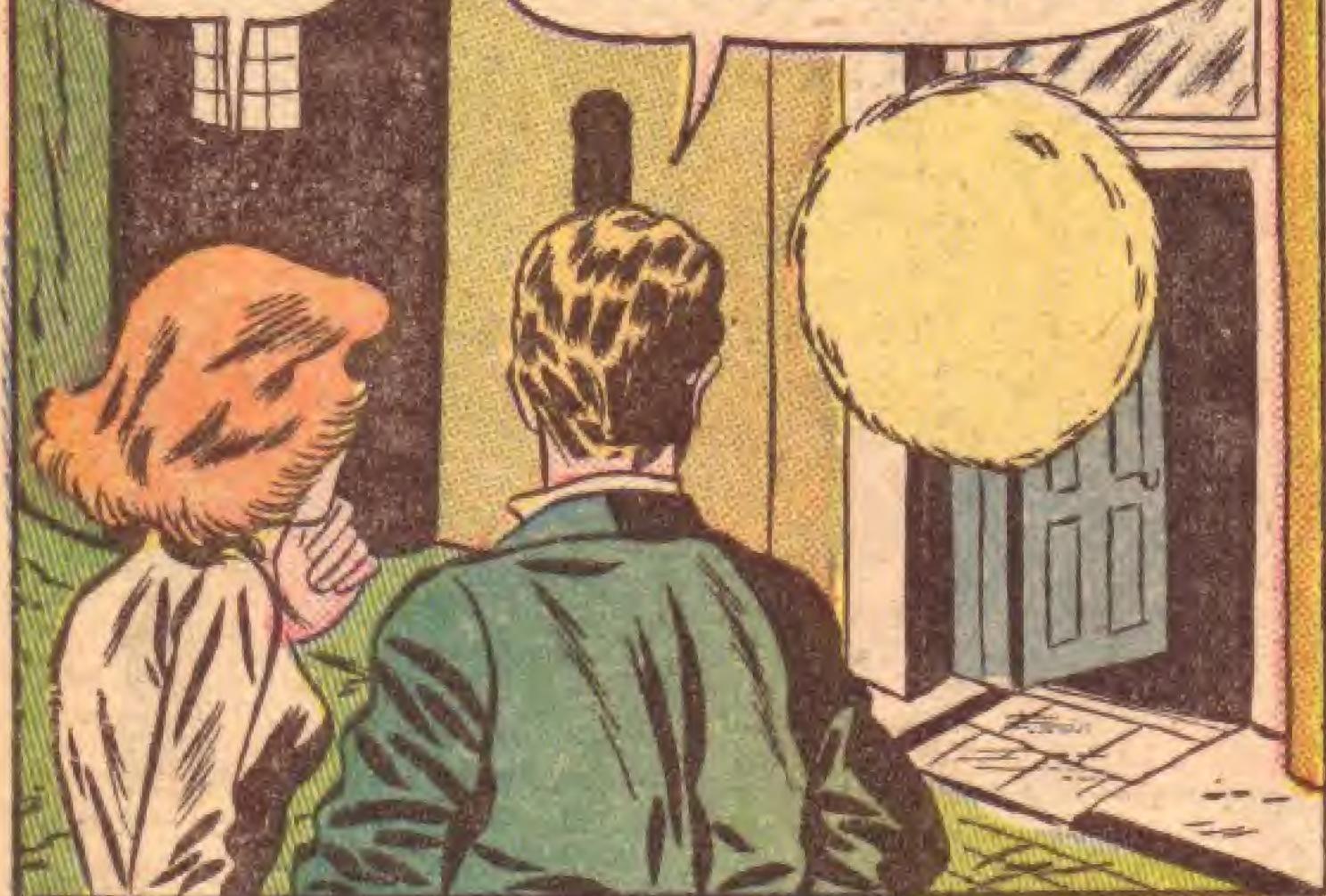
FOR AN INSTANT, THE EERIE SPHERES WHIRL
IN THE MURKY GLOOM-- AND THEN--

GOOD HEAVENS-- YEP-- AND HOVERING
THEY'VE FUSED
INTO A
SINGLE
GLOWING
MASS !

TOWARD THE CASTLE ! I
CAN'T GUESS WHAT THAT
LIGHT MEANS, GAIL -- BUT
SOMETHING INSIDE
IS ATTRACTING IT !

SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS A
CHALLENGE TO ME, HONEY--
BUT AFTER WHAT YOU'VE
BEEN THROUGH **ALREADY**--
MAYBE WE'D BETTER
NOT GET TOO
INQUISITIVE !

NO, CLIFF ! IT'LL BE
BETTER TO FIND
OUT THE SECRET
OF THE CASTLE--
RATHER THAN BE
HAUNTED BY DOUBT
FOR THE REST
OF OUR LIVES !



SOON AFTERWARD-- DEEP
INSIDE THE CASTLE --

NO QUESTION
ABOUT IT,
CLIFF-- IT
WANTS
TO GET
INTO
THAT
CHAMBER !

THERE'S NO USE
TRYING TO GUESS
WHAT'S INSIDE !
IT MAY BE THE
VERY THING THE
HANDS TRIED
TO WARN US
ABOUT-- BUT
LET'S FIND
OUT !



THAT'S WHAT
THE LIGHT WAS
TRYING TO REACH,
CLIFF -- BUT
WHAT IS IT ?

STRANGE ! IT SEEMS
TO BE GLASS-- AND
I'LL SWEAR THERE'S
SOMETHING
MOVING
IN IT !



IT'S A FACE, GAIL ! YE GODS--
IF EVER STARK EVIL COULD TAKE
SHAPE -- **THIS IS IT !**



SUDDENLY--
CLIFF--
THE
HANDS !

KEEP CALM-- THERE'S
NO NEED TO FEAR
THEM !



NO--NO--
I DON'T
WANT
THEM
TOUCHING
ME!

GAIL--WATCH
THE TABLE!

IN THE NEXT HORROR-
LADEN SECOND--

HA-HA! THIS IS WHAT
THE HANDS TRIED TO
PREVENT!

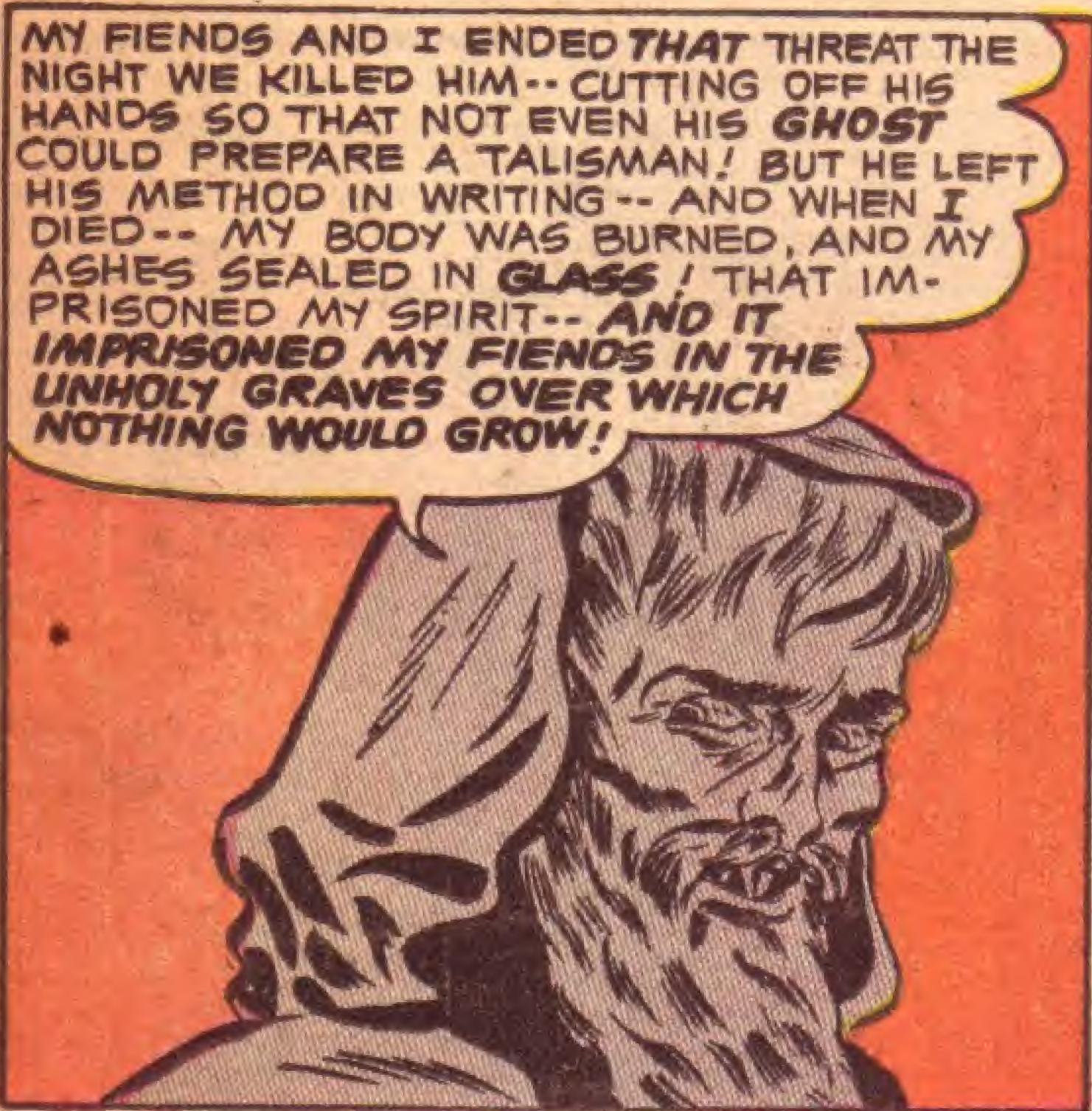
TRYING
TO KEEP
US FROM
GETTING
OUT, EH?
WHO ARE
YOU?

FIVE CENTURIES AGO, I WAS A
WIZARD-- ABLE TO CALL FORTH
FIENDS THAT TERRORIZED
THE COUNTRYSIDE! ONLY ONE
MAN COULD DEVISE A
COUNTERCHARM-- THE
SCIENTIST WHO OWNED
THIS CASTLE!



MY FIENDS AND I ENDED THAT THREAT THE NIGHT WE KILLED HIM-- CUTTING OFF HIS HANDS SO THAT NOT EVEN HIS GHOST COULD PREPARE A TALISMAN! BUT HE LEFT HIS METHOD IN WRITING-- AND WHEN I DIED-- MY BODY WAS BURNED, AND MY ASHES SEALED IN GLASS! THAT IMPRISONED MY SPIRIT-- AND IT IMPRISONED MY FIENDS IN THE UNHOLY GRAVES OVER WHICH NOTHING WOULD GROW!

OKAY, CREEP--
NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO BE ON THE LOOSE!



THOSE HANDS COULDN'T TALK, THE HANDS GAIL-- BUT THEY TRIED JUST ABOUT EVERY OTHER WAY TO KEEP US FROM GETTING INTO A SPOT LIKE THIS!

WON'T HELP YOU NOW-- FLEEING WON'T HELP YOU-- YOU'RE ON THE BRINK OF DOOM!

FIENDS-- YOUR EXILE OF DEATH IS OVER! RISE-- AND DO MY BIDDING!

CLIFF-- THOSE GLOWING PATCHES ARE MOVING! THAT'S WHERE THEY'RE BURIED-- AND THEY'RE COMING OUT!





The WITCHES' BREW



THE NEXT TIME YOU SEE A WITCH RIDING A BROOM ACROSS A MOONLIT SKY, READER, DON'T RUSH OFF TO THE NEAREST PSYCHIATRIST---JUST REMEMBER THIS STORY, AND TRUST THE EVIDENCE OF YOUR SENSES! FOR HERE'S THE STRANGE TALE OF AN UNWITTING ADVENTURE INTO THE FORBIDDEN WORLD OF WITCHCRAFT AND DEMONOLOGY---A TALE THAT SHOULD MAKE YOU BEWARE OF COOKING UP THE WITCHES' BREW!

DOUBLE, DOUBLE, TOIL AND TROUBLE,
FIRE BURN AND CAULDRON BUBBLE---
FILLET OF A FENNY SNAKE,
IN THE CAULDRON BOIL AND BAKE---

RIDICULOUS
--- HA-HA-HA!

OH, HA-HA... I
... I CAN'T HELP
LAUGHING! THIS
WHOLE SCENE FROM
MACBETH IS SO--- SO

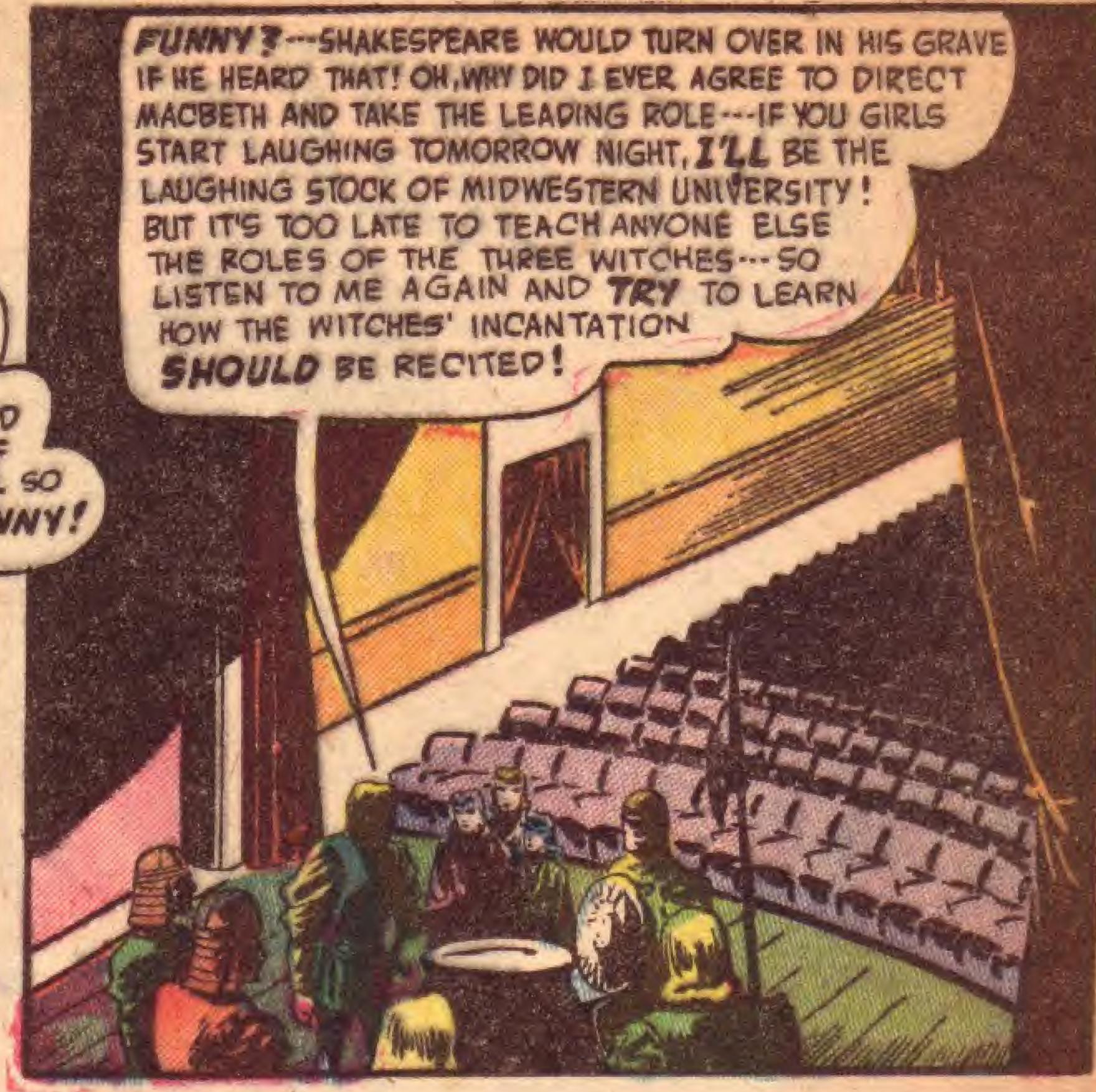
STOP IT,
HARRIET...
YOU'RE MAKING
US LAUGH!

OH, NOT
AGAIN!
THIS IS
TOO
MUCH---!

YOU GIRLS HAVE RUINED EVERY REHEARSAL WE'VE HAD BY LAUGHING AT THIS SCENE! AND IF YOU CAN'T PLAY THE PARTS OF THE THREE WITCHES WITH THE PROPER DEGREE OF FIENDISH EVIL AND EERIE HORROR NOW, HOW CAN YOU HOPE TO KEEP FROM WRECKING THE WHOLE PLAY TOMORROW NIGHT... **OPENING NIGHT?**

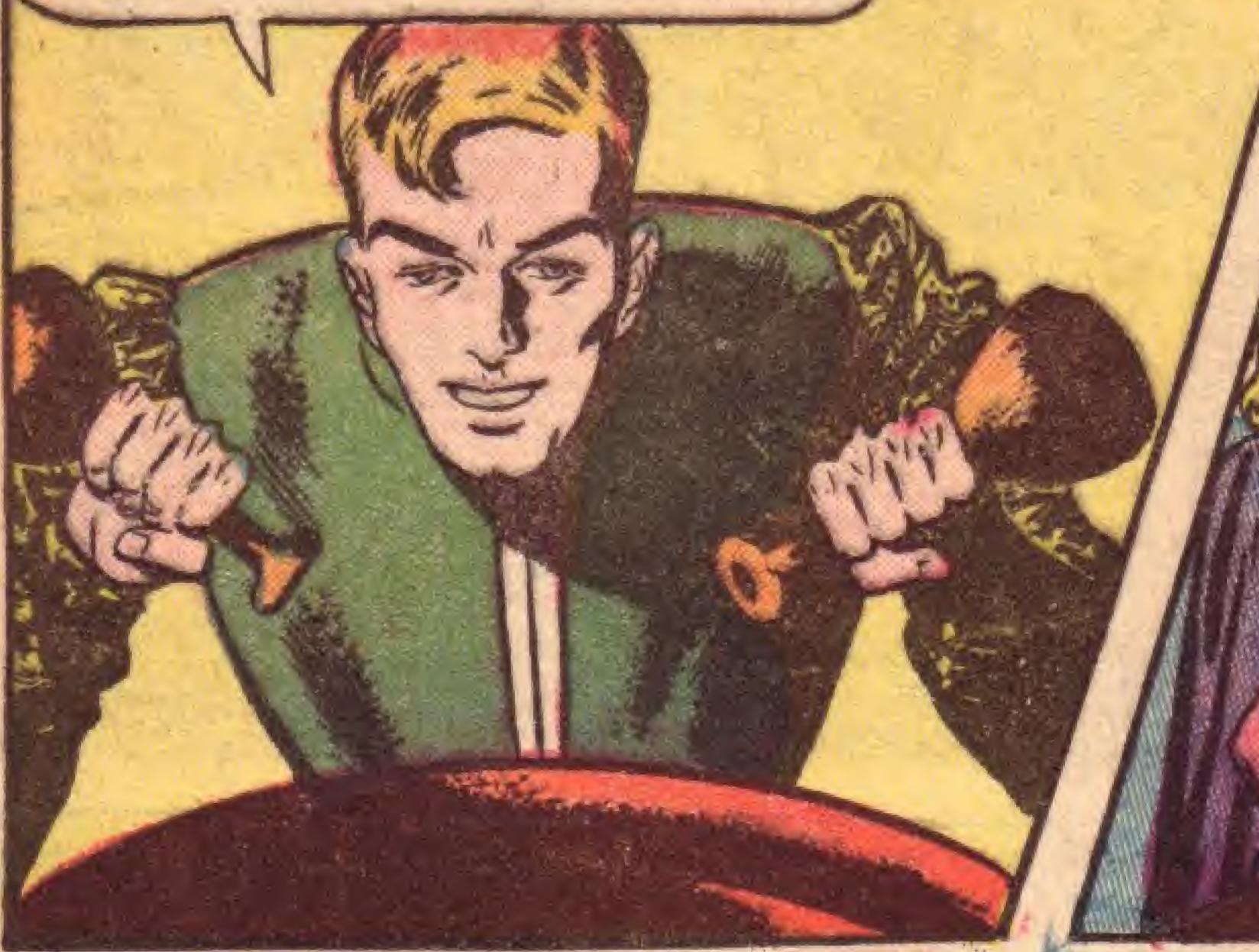
WE...WE'RE SORRY, JACK...BUT WE JUST CAN'T HELP OURSELVES! WE KNOW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO PLAY UP THE HORROR OF THIS SCENE --- BUT IT'S ALL SO **FUNNY!**

FUNNY? --- SHAKESPEARE WOULD TURN OVER IN HIS GRAVE IF HE HEARD THAT! OH, WHY DID I EVER AGREE TO DIRECT MACBETH AND TAKE THE LEADING ROLE --- IF YOU GIRLS START LAUGHING TOMORROW NIGHT, I'LL BE THE LAUGHING STOCK OF MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY! BUT IT'S TOO LATE TO TEACH ANYONE ELSE THE ROLES OF THE THREE WITCHES --- SO LISTEN TO ME AGAIN AND **TRY** TO LEARN HOW THE WITCHES' INCANTATION **SHOULD BE RECITED!**



FILLET OF A PENNY SNAKE, IN THE CAULDRON BOIL AND BAKE,
EYE OF NEWT AND TOE OF FROG, WOOL OF BAT AND TONGUE OF DOG,
ADDER'S FORK AND BLIND WORM'S STING, LIZARDS LEG AND HOWLET'S WING,
FOR A CHARM OF POWERFUL TROUBLE ...

WAIT---I JUST GOT AN IDEA! I THINK I KNOW JUST HOW TO GET THE NECESSARY ELEMENTS OF HORROR INTO THE PLAY TOMORROW NIGHT! THE REHEARSAL IS OVER---I'LL SEE YOU ALL HALF AN HOUR BEFORE CURTAIN TIME TOMORROW!



AH, MY RESEARCH INTO SHAKESPEAREAN SOURCE-BOOKS PAID OFF! NOW I KNOW THAT FILLET OF FENNY SNAKE MEANS THE LUNGS OF A SWAMP-SNAKE, THAT ADDER'S FORK IS THE FORKED TONGUE OF AN ADDER, THAT BLIND WORM'S STING IS ACTUALLY THE STING OF A SMALL SNAKE-LIZARD --- AND THAT A HOWLET IS SIMPLY A

LITTLE OWL! AND NOW TO HUSTLE DOWN TO THE ANATOMY-BIOLOGY LAB IN THE MEDICAL SCHOOL!



LISTEN, GIL, THIS IS URGENT---HERE'S A LIST OF THINGS I NEED BY TOMORROW NIGHT! CAN YOU GET THEM FOR ME?

CAN DO, JACK! I CAN GET THE INGREDIENTS YOU WANT FROM SPECIMENS IN COLD STORAGE! BUT TELL ME---WHO ARE YOU PLANNING TO **SCARE** WITH THIS GRIMMISH CONCOCTION?



NEXT NIGHT, BACKSTAGE AT THE MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY THEATRE...

WELL, JACK, WHAT'S YOUR BRIGHT IDEA-- ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE US TEAR-GAS TO KEEP US FROM LAUGHING TONIGHT?

NO, I'M JUST GOING TO GIVE YOU THESE THREE FLASKS TO USE AS TONIGHT'S PROPS! BUT THESE ARE REALLY AUTHENTIC PROPS, BECAUSE THEY CONTAIN ALL THE INGREDIENTS SHAKESPEARE MENTIONED IN THE WITCHES' SCENE---FILLET OF PENNY SNAKE, NEWT'S EYE, FROG'S TOE, BAT'S SKIN, DOG'S TONGUE, ADDER'S FORK...

OH, HOW---
HOW HORRIBLE!
TAKE THEM AWAY---WE
WE WON'T EVEN TOUCH
THE DISGUSTING THINGS!

OH, YES, YOU WILL---YOU
WOULDN'T DARE WALK OUT
ON THE PLAY NOW!

HE'S RIGHT-- WE'D BETTER GO THROUGH WITH IT, GIRLS!

ALL RIGHT-- LET'S HAVE THOSE NASTY OLD BOTTLES!

THAT'S IT--JUST KEEP THAT NOTE OF HORROR IN YOUR VOICES WHEN YOU'RE ON-STAGE! AT LEAST I'M SURE THERE WON'T BE ANY LAUGHTER TONIGHT!

DOUBLE, DOUBLE, TOIL AND TROUBLE,
FIRE BURN AND CAULDRON BUBBLE,
FILLET OF A FENNY SNAKE,
IN THE CAULDRON BOIL AND BAKE...

HOW EERIE... EVEN THE SOUND OF THEIR VOICES SENDS CHILLS UP AND DOWN MY SPINE!

IT SEEMS LIKE AUTHENTIC SORCERY---AS IF SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL IS ACTUALLY ABOUT TO HAPPEN!

...ADDER'S FORK AND BLIND WORM'S STING, LIZARD'S LEG AND HOWLET'S WING...

WHEN, AS THE LAST WORDS OF THE INCANTATION FADE AWAY...

CR-RACK!





I... I'VE GOT TO FIND SOME MEANS OF DESTROYING THEM... BEFORE THEY DESTROY THE WHOLE COUNTRY! WAIT... THIS... THIS MAY BE IT!

Ye antidote for
witches' brew is
made of *cicuta*
virosa, *potentilla*
palustris & *circae*
in ye following
proportions...

PROFESSOR HANSCOMBE?
THIS IS JACK MORRISEY, OF
YOUR ADVANCED BOTANY
CLASS! LISTEN, PROFESSOR,
YOU'VE GOT TO MEET ME AT
THE BOTANICAL GREENHOUSE
RIGHT AWAY... IT'S DEADLY
SERIOUS!

WHAT? YOU MUST BE
MAD, YOUNG MAN! I'LL
BE DOWN THERE, ALL
RIGHT... BUT JUST TO
SEE THAT YOU'RE TAUGHT
A LESSON FOR DISTURB-
ING DECENT PEOPLE
THIS TIME OF
NIGHT!

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

NO TIME FOR QUESTIONS, PROFESSOR! JUST TELL ME QUICKLY WHETHER THE GREENHOUSE CONTAINS THE PLANTS KNOWN AS *CICUTA VIROSA*, *POTENTILLA PALUGTRIS*, AND *CIRCAE*!

WHY... WHY, YES... THOSE ARE THE LATIN TERMS FOR WATER-HEMLOCK, MARSH CINQUEFOIL, AND ENCHANTER'S NIGHT-SHADE! BUT... BUT WHAT... WHY...?

I'LL EXPLAIN LATER...
RIGHT NOW I WANT
THOSE PLANTS...

FAST!

HE... HE'S PROBABLY
DANGEROUS... I'D
BETTER HUMOR
HIM!

ALL RIGHT, HERE
ARE THE PLANTS
YOU WANTED!

AH, I WAS RIGHT
WHEN I SENSED
DANGER EMANATING
FROM THIS
LOCALITY! WE
MUST ACT...
QUICKLY!

HARRIET! WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
HERE--AND WHY
THAT GETUP?

JACK...
DARLING!
I... I HAD TO
COME TO YOU...

I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND! I'VE HAD A
CRUSH ON YOU FOR MONTHS, BUT YOU
NEVER GAVE ME
A TUMBLE
BEFORE!

DON'T TALK, SWEET-
HEART... JUST PUT
YOUR ARMS AROUND
ME AND KISS ME!

COME, MY LOVE... LET'S
GET OUT OF THIS STUFFY
PLACE, GO SOMEPLACE
WHERE WE CAN BE
ALONE...

ALL RIGHT, HARRIET!
I ... I CAN'T EVEN
THINK STRAIGHT...
IT'S AS IF I'M
BEWITCHED!

WAIT... BEWITCHED! WITCHES HAVE THE
POWER TO CHANGE INTO ANY HUMAN FORM
... AND THAT MAY EXPLAIN THE SUDDEN
CHANGE THAT CAME OVER YOU! AND
THERE'S ONE WAY TO FIND OUT---WHO
PLAYS FIRST BASE FOR THE DODGERS,
HARRIET?

F... FIRST BASE? D...
DODGERS? WHY SHOULD WE
BOther WITH SUCH SILLY
MATTERS, MY LOVE... COME
WITH ME AND...



SILLY? THEN YOU CAN'T BE
HARRIET---BECAUSE THE REAL
HARRIET IS A RABID DODGER
FAN! AND THERE COULD ONLY
BE ONE REASON WHY YOU
TRIED TO LURE ME
AWAY...



GREAT SCOTT
--- THAT--- THAT
LOVELY GIRL
TURNED INTO
A WITCH
WHEN YOU
THRUST THOSE
PLANTS INTO
HER FACE!

YES, IT'S A
POWERFUL
CHARM AGAINST
WITCHES--- SO
YOU'D BETTER
STICK CLOSE TO
ME, PROFESSOR!

I FAILED!
... COME,
HECATE
... LILITH...!



DROP THOSE PLANTS
--- BEFORE WE KILL
YOU BOTH!

CRACK!

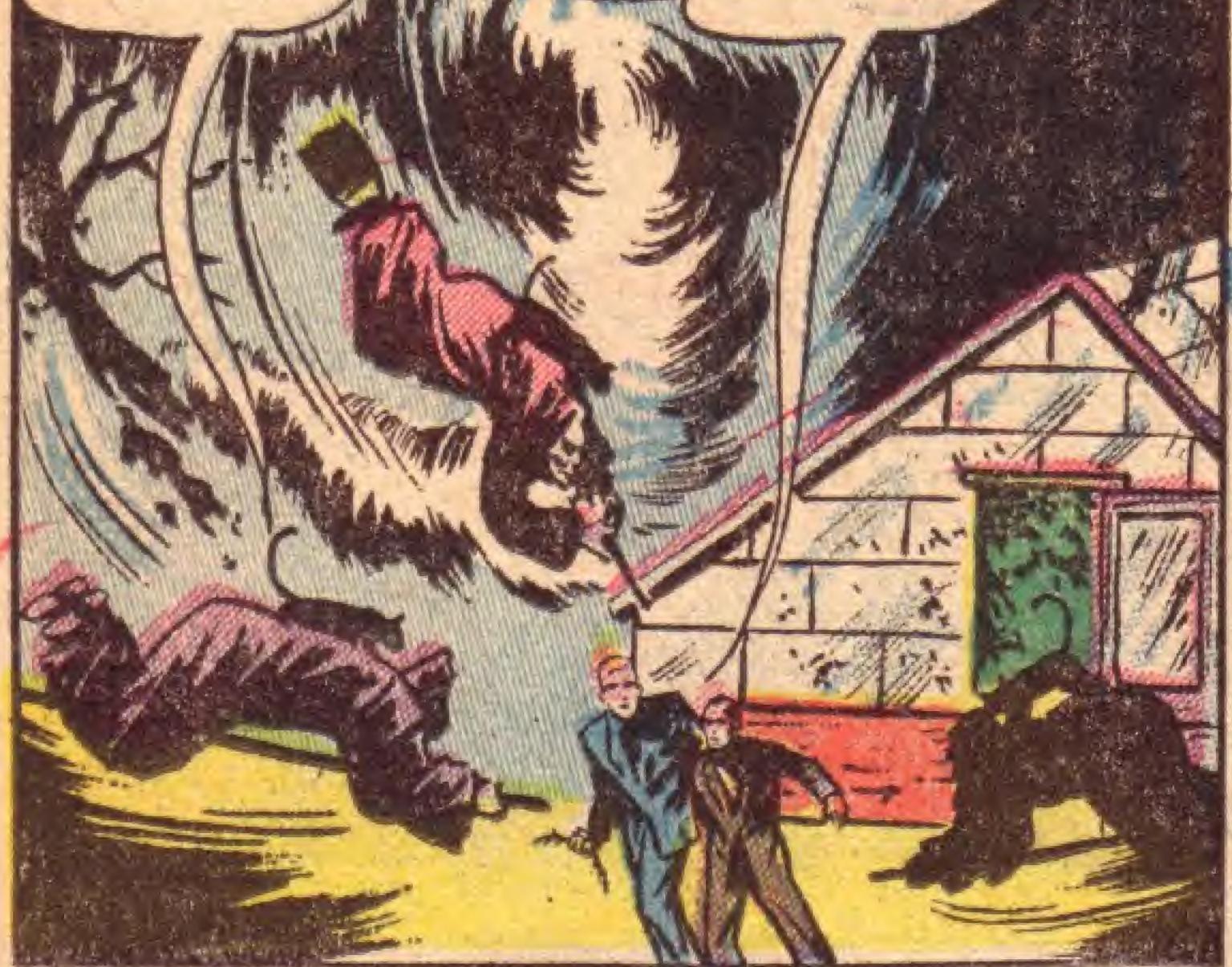


NO, YOU WON'T
--- NOT WHEN I
DRAW THE MAGIC
CIRCLE WITH
THESE PLANTS
AROUND
US!



THE CHARMED CIRCLE! IT MAKES THEM IMMUNE TO OUR MAGIC!

SEE, PROFESSOR? IT WORKED... THEY CAN'T HARM US! COME ON... LET'S HEAD FOR THE COLLEGE THEATRE!



10 MINUTES LATER...

THE INGREDIENTS THAT SUMMONED THOSE WITCHES ARE STILL HERE! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DROP THE CORRECT PROPORTIONS OF THE ANTIDOTE INTO THE CAULDRON, AND THE WITCHES' BREW WILL BE NEUTRALIZED... SENDING THEM BACK INTO THE LIMBO OF NOTHINGNESS!

NO... DON'T SPARE US, AND WE'LL GRANT ANY WISH YOU NAME!



HERE IS THE ELIXIR OF LIFE! ONE SIP... AND YOU LIVE FOREVER!

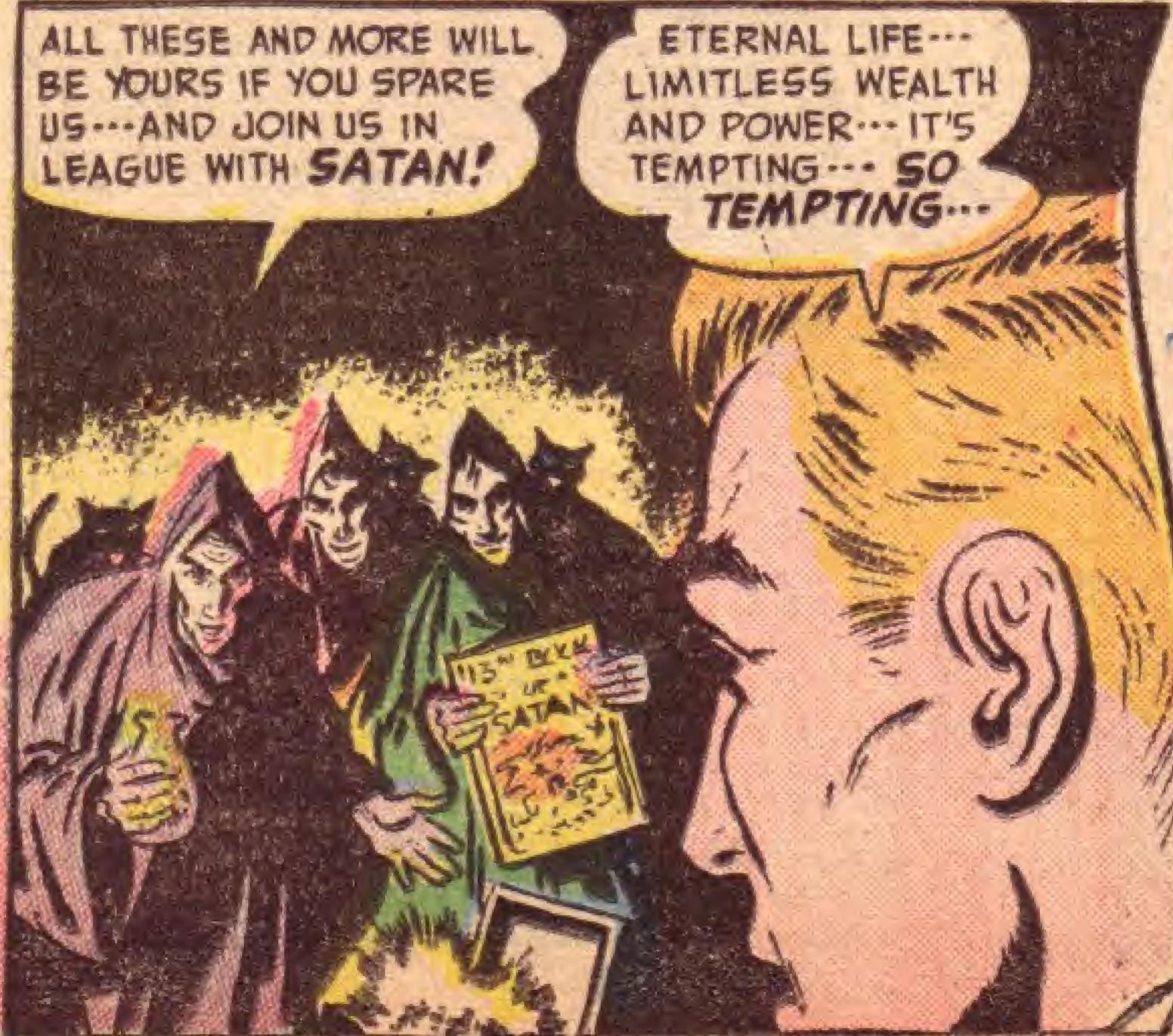
HERE IS A SORCERER'S RANSOM... A FORTUNE IN THE RAREST, MOST PERFECT GEMS!

AND HERE IS THE 13TH BOOK OF SATAN... ONCE YOU READ ITS SECRETS, ALL OF MANKIND WILL BE YOUR SLAVES!



ALL THESE AND MORE WILL BE YOURS IF YOU SPARE US... AND JOIN US IN LEAGUE WITH SATAN!

ETERNAL LIFE... LIMITLESS WEALTH AND POWER... IT'S TEMPTING... SO TEMPTING...



ALL... ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DROP THIS TO THE FLOOR... AND THE WORLD IS MINE... MINE...!

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO BRING HIM BACK TO HIS SENSES... BY REMINDING HIM OF THE EVIL THEY WROUGHT! THANK HEAVENS I HAVE MY SMALL POCKET RADIO WITH ME... THERE OUGHT TO BE PLENTY OF NEWS BROADCASTS ON NOW!

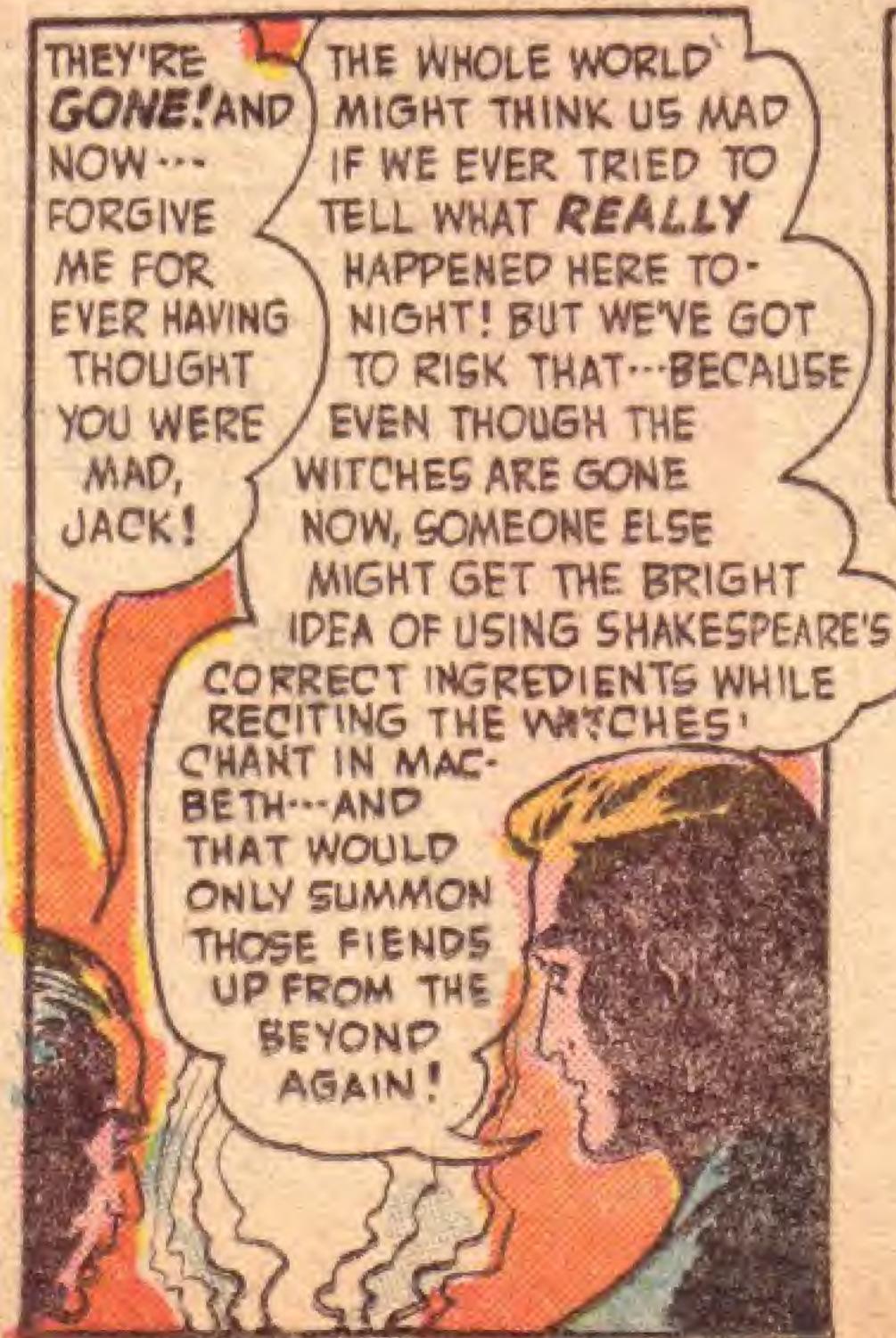
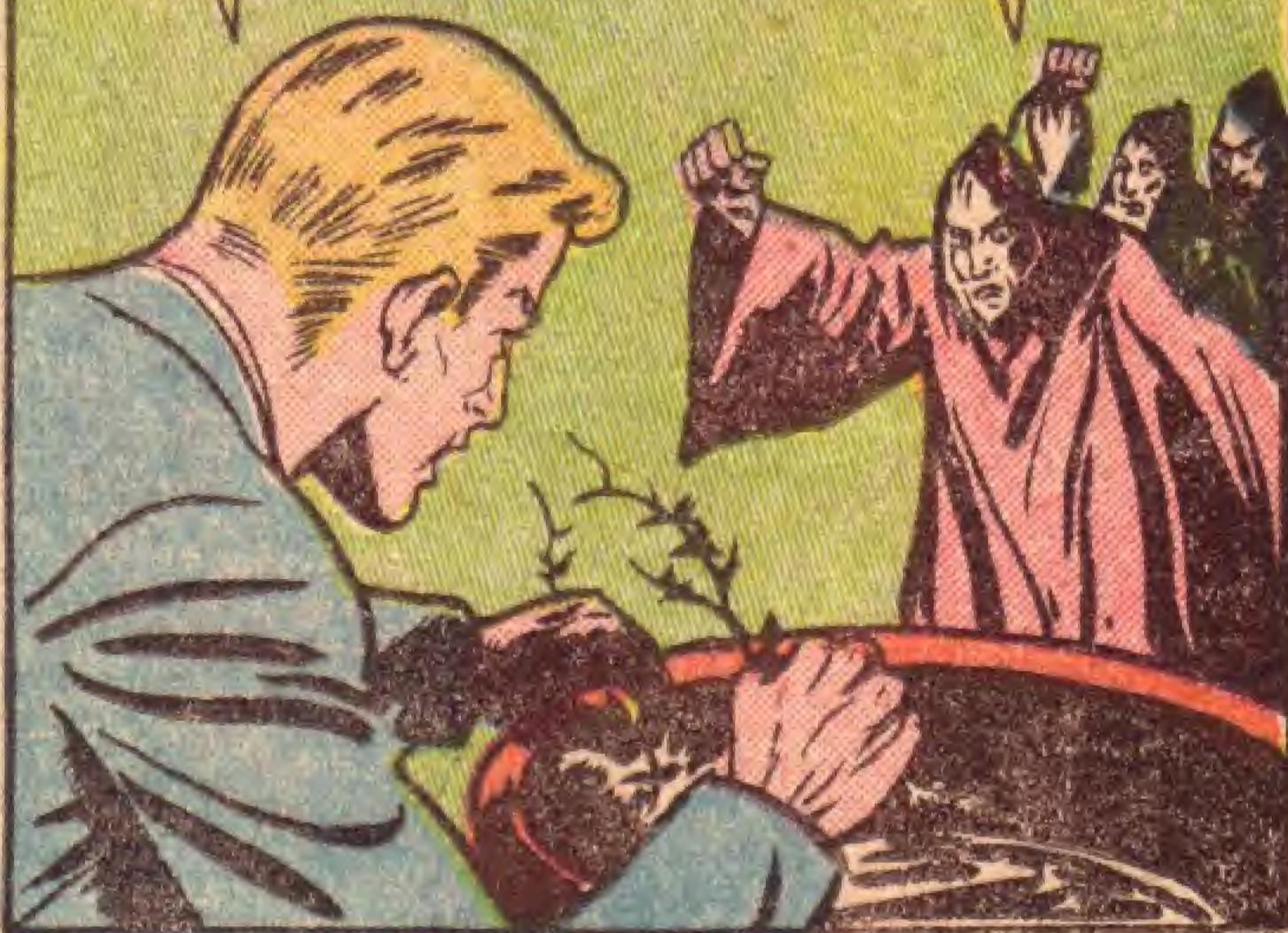
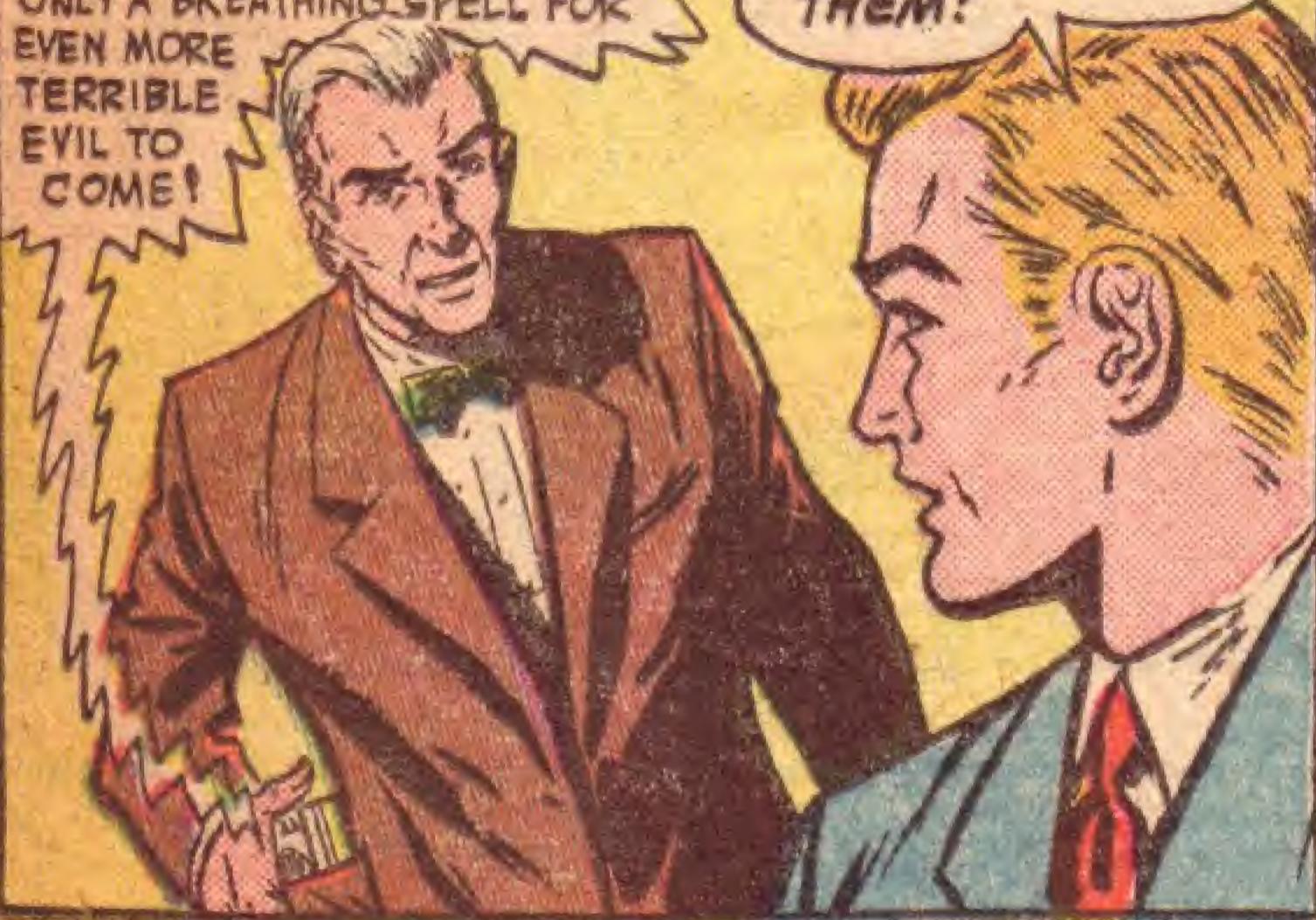


... THE TOLL IS MOUNTING IN THE STRANGE SERIES OF DEATHS AND EPIDEMICS IN THE AREA AROUND MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY! THERE HAVE BEEN NO NEW OUTBREAKS WITHIN THE LAST HALF HOUR... BUT IT IS FEARED THAT THIS IS ONLY A BREATHING SPELL FOR EVEN MORE TERRIBLE EVIL TO COME!

GREAT SCOTT... I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE EVIL THESE FIENDS WROUGHT! THANKS FOR REMINDING ME, PROF. ...AND FOR KEEPING ME FROM JOINING THEM!

I'D BETTER START DIVIDING THESE PLANTS INTO THE CORRECT PROPORTIONS AND DROP THEM INTO THE WITCHES' BREW FAST... BEFORE THESE DEMONS TRY ANY MORE OF THEIR WITCHCRAFT ON ME!

ONLY ONE CAN HELP US NOW... THE MASTER OF EVIL... SATAN HIMSELF!



*Be the
MASTER!
not the slave!*

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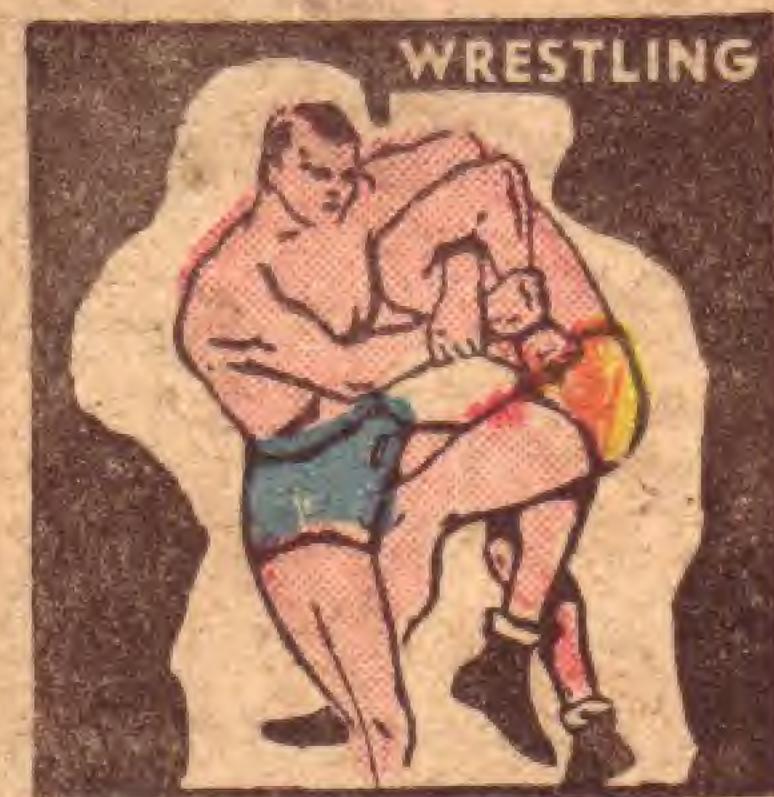
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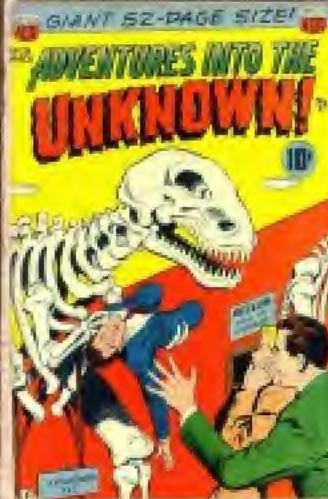
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